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THE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS. VOLUME V, A SUMMARY.

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FOUR TECHNICAL STUDIES OF A NINE-YEAR RESEARCH PROJECT ARE CONDENSED TO OUTLINE PRIMARY FACTORS IN THE FIELD OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ENLISTMENT OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS. EACH SUMMARY REPORT INCLUDES--(1) A SHORT INTRODUCTION DESCRIBING THE PURPOSE OF THE PARTICULAR STUDY, THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THE STUDY WAS FORMULATED, AND THE METHODS USED TO COLLECT THE DATA, (2) A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY, AND (3) IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR THE CONDUCT AND FURTHER STUDY OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS. THE STUDIES FOCUS ON (1) INFORMAL COMMUNICATION ABOUT SCHOOLS, (2) THE AGENTS AND AGENCIES THAT MEDIATE THE FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN CITIZENS AND SCHOOLS, (3) THE STRUCTURAL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS, AND (4) THE PROCESS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS. THIS IS PART V OF A SERIES. RELATED DOCUMENTS INCLUDE EA 001 091, EA 001 092, EA 001 093, AND EA 001 094. (JK)

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THE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A SUMMARY

BY

RICHARD F. CARTER AND WILLIAM R. ODELL

VOLUME V

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This volume is a summary of the following technical reports:

Vol. I. Informal Communications about Schools
by Richard F. Carter, Bradley S. Greenberg, and Alvin Haimson

Vol. II. Between Citizens and Schools
by Richard F. Carter and Steven H. Chaffee

Vol. III. The Structure of School-Community Relations
by Richard F. Carter, W. Lee Ruggels, and Richard F. Olson
with David T. Tronsgard, Robert Callahan, Robert Kirkpatrick,
Donald Kenny, John Taylor, George Comstock, David Willey,
and John Toscano

Vol. IV. The Process of School-Community Relations
by Richard F. Carter and W. Lee Ruggels

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Preface

School officials and interested citizens in school districts across the country are concerned with problems of support for public education. Their concern was the basis for this project. Their cooperation was indispensable for the completion of our studies. Many gave generously of time and effort.

This summary volume has been prepared for these persons in particular, as our report to them on their contributions to the project.

The technical volumes which are here summarized represent the work of many educational experts and research personnel. These efforts have been acknowledged in the preceding volumes. But for those who will see only this volume, we should like to point out some important contributors.

Primarily, we have been able to carry out this project because of the capable--even dedicated--staff members at the Institute for Communication Research and School of Education at Stanford who worked on the various studies. Their names appear as coauthors of the technical volumes: W. Lee Ruggels, Steven H. Chaffee, Bradley S. Greenberg, Alvin Haimson, and George Comstock of the Institute for Communication Research; Richard F. Olson, David T. Tronsgard, Robert Callahan, Robert Kirkpatrick, Donald Kenny, John Taylor, David Willey, and John Toscano of the School of Education.

We have also benefitted from the counsel of faculty colleagues: Wilbur Schramm, Nathan Maccoby, Chilton R. Bush, and James E. Brinton of the Institute for Communication Research; H. Thomas James and William Strand of the School of Education.

Our most extensive study in this project was greatly enhanced by the guidance given us by five educational experts: Roald F. Campbell, Jacob W. Getzels, Roy M. Hall, Andrew W. Halpin, and Roy K. Wilson.

For several studies, we needed the assistance of national research agencies: Survey Research Center, University of Michigan; National Analysts, Inc., Philadelphia; and, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. We profited from the personal efforts of their staffs: Morris Axelrod and Beverly Clifford of the Survey Research Center, John Monroe of National Analysts, Inc., and Paul Sheatsley of the National Opinion Research Center.

Research assistants who participated helpfully in these studies were: Maxwell E. McCombs, Anthony Scantlen, Robert Ellis, Ray Sweigert, Douglas Fuchs, Ronald Pyszka, Phillip Tichenor, and Patricia Roach of the Institute for Communication Research; Robert Evans, Harold Dyck, Jack Alexander, and Mark W. Lewis of the School of Education.

Our competent secretarial staff included: Joan Reynertson, Linda Miller, Gracie Barron, Cynthia Stabb, and Brenda Cook of the Institute for Communication Research; Gay Quarles, Esther Huang, Annabelle Johnson, and Joyce Fasnacht of the School of Education.

RFC WRO

Chapter I

Introduction

By the mid 1950's, school financial issues were no longer receiving the successful reviews at election time that they enjoyed during the immediate post World War II period. Educational leaders, concerned about support for public education, looked to research for some help.

The nature of that help, they felt, would have to be in finding out more about the role of understanding in public support. For understanding appeared to be a logical, and potentially stable, basis for support.

In this context, the first of our studies on school-community relations began in 1957. Then, just as we began, the space age arrived. Now there was additional impetus to find out more about how the public could--or did--understand educational policy matters. Educational change was about to be accelerated. Financial election issues were to be decided on minds as well as bodies, on the quality as well as the quantity of pupils.

By 1960, we could report the results of two studies (Voters and Their Schools and Communities and Their Schools). Now, in 1966, we have completed three more studies of school-community relations. It is these three studies that are summarized in this volume.

There have been, in addition, a number of other studies reported that were carried out within the context of our work. These are all listed in Appendix A of this summary report.

All of this work has been done under contract with the Cooperative Research Branch, U.S. Office of Education.

Typically, the studies have been of two types. We have conducted studies of individuals in relation to schools. And we have conducted studies of school districts as units.

The focus of all the studies has been communication behavior, for only through communication can understanding be achieved. But we have always viewed communication in one or another setting.

When studying the individual, we have observed his communication behavior in relation to the attitudes he holds related to the schools, and in relation to his other forms of participation.

When studying the district, we have observed communication behavior in the matrix of factors which constrain or enhance the role of understanding in school-community relations.

To carry through our work, we have often had to advance the state of communication theory. Understanding, for example, could not be studied until it had been defined. Similarly, informal communication could not be studied until we had defined the formal aspects of communication. Nor could we study the role of mediating agencies between schools without defining the functions of mediated communication.

What do we have after nine years of work? We know what many of the important elements of school-community relations are. We know something of the way in which school and communities interact. We have some ideas for improving school-community relations, based on our findings.

This volume presents a distillation of our work and of the progress we have made. While it constitutes a summary of four technical reports from our recent work, it also contains the substance of our earlier work.

To the researcher who will step into this field next, this summary is a brief introduction. He must delve into the technical reports for substantive detail and methodological procedures.

For the educational leader who ventures to utilize the results of our work, the summary is but a catalogue to the data that can be of help to him. He too must turn to the technical reports.

This summary, while helpful to the researcher and educational leader, is directed primarily to the many individuals who, concerned with the course of school-community relations, are looking to us for an account of our research.

* * *

In the four chapters to follow, each of the four technical reports will be summarized in turn.

Each chapter begins with a short introduction, describing the purposes of the particular study, the theoretical framework within which we worked, and the methods we used to collect the data.

There follows a summary of the most important findings from the study. These are abstracted. The reader, should he be interested in the documentation of these results, will have to look to the technical reports for the full story.

We conclude each summary with our views on the implications of the study, for the conduct and further study of school-community relations.

Chapter II is a summary of our study on informal communication about schools.

Chapter III is a summary of our study on the agents and agencies that mediate the flow of information between citizens and schools.

Chapter IV is a summary of Part I of our third study, on the structural aspects of school-community relations.

Chapter V is a summary of Part II of the third study, on the process of school-community relations.

Chapter II

Informal Communication about Schools

Under the best of conditions, most citizens have few opportunities to participate directly in educational policy matters. And, typically, that participation in formal decision making comes in occasional reviews, in school elections. Thus we found in earlier studies that much of the citizen's communication behavior relative to schools occurred in casual conversations, in informal contexts.

Our first study, then, was designed to obtain data on the nature of informal communication about schools. Its purposes parallel two major needs of educational leaders. They must know more about the flow of information in school districts. They must also know more about the flow of influence.

To successfully initiate policy, the educational leader must inform. He must know what the informal channels for disseminating information are. He must know how to enter them. He must know when to enter them. He must know who should enter them on behalf of the schools. Further, he should know something of the channels that are open back to the schools.

Since educational policy inevitably means financial support, the educational leader must influence. He needs to evoke latent values supportive of educational change. He needs to know what there is about the flow of influence that affects his efforts to win support.

In this study of informal communication about schools, we set out five objectives:

1. To locate the persons who talk about schools. We knew from our earlier work that only about half the citizenry would engage in conversations about schools. It would be a helpful gain in efficiency to define that segment.

2. To describe the kinds of persons who engage in different amounts of different kinds of conversations. We wanted to see what kinds of persons had the most scope of conversations, what kinds were responsible for initiating conversations--and how they did so, what kinds talked to persons at different levels of knowledge about schools (acting as relays), what kinds attempted more influence--and had more success.

3. To describe the relationships between the flow of information and the flow of influence. Would there be communication leaders as well as opinion leaders? Or would opinion leaders be but a special kind of communication leaders? Could school leaders reasonably use the same communication approaches for informing as for influencing?

4. To describe the kinds of persons who act differently in carrying on conversations. What happens within conversations? Who dominates them? What is the give and take ratio for different kinds of persons, for example, the opinion leaders? Who offers opinion rather than information? Who uses outside sources for assertions of fact or value?

5. To describe the networks of informal communication that exist in school districts--their size, distribution, differences in nets within districts, the identity of early communicators, location of conversations,

relationship of conversants, and how the factor of time affects informal communication in the period prior to district financial elections.

Methods

Our general procedure was to reconstruct conversations dealing with school matters in the ten day period prior to a financial election in five school districts.

In each district, we began with a sample of 50 households, interviewing each adult in a household. Thus, combining across districts, we could compare communicators with noncommunicators.

For those adults who had engaged in conversations about their schools, we ascertained the conversant(s) and reconstructed the conversation(s). Additional questions were asked to identify the attributes of the respondent.

We then went to each conversant named and conducted a similar interview, including his conversations with those not previously in the sample. We continued this "snowballing" technique until the day before the local election.

We selected districts to work in that represented a broad spectrum of socio-economic status. We interviewed just prior to a local financial election to achieve comparability, while insuring that we would find conversations at a high-water mark.

From the reconstructed conversations (over 2,000) we scored each respondent for various aspects of conversation scope, initiative, direction, influence, conduct, and content. These furnished much of the data analyzed, along with the respondent's demographic, participatory, and attitudinal characteristics.

A very important piece of the data gathered dealt with two indexes of the respondent's interests in school affairs. These measured the parent orientation and the citizen orientation.

The parent orientation provides an assessment of the degree to which a person's interest in school affairs could be viewed as the commitment of a parent.

The citizen orientation provides a similar assessment of the degree to which a person's interest in school affairs could be viewed as the commitment of interest in public affairs generally.

In the analysis, we made great use of these two orientations. We used them to locate persons. They give us an efficient way of locating key groups of respondents, by easily identifiable attributes. We also used them as analytic controls. What can be, and often has been, attributed to other variables in the way of relationships to communication behavior may be due to these consumer oriented interests.

Results

The pages that follow record the results of our analyses. We have organized the content under four headings, rather than the five suggested by our list of objectives.

The Communicators

About two-fifths of the adults originally sampled had had a conversation about the schools with someone outside the household in the week previous to the interview.

One can do a pretty good job of predicting who is an informal communicator, using only the parent and citizen orientations.

If a person has both orientations, we can predict he will be an informal communicator, and be right two out of three times. (That is, he has or will have a child in public school--high parent orientation; and, he belongs to one or more nonschool organizations--high citizen orientation.)

Of the two orientations, the parent orientation has the stronger relationship with communicatory activity. It distinguishes between communicators and noncommunicators nearly twice as well as the citizen orientation.

The two orientations do not appear to be related to each other--thereby increasing their predictive efficiency. Further, they appear to represent independent increments of commitment. For each distinguishes communicators from noncommunicators better in the presence of the other. If the same kinds of interest were involved, we would expect them to do better in the absence of the other.

We can do an even better job of predicting who will not be an informal communicator. Any person who lacks both orientations and who is also a short time resident of the district is quite unlikely to talk about local schools. We found none who did.

Because the two orientations account for much of the difference between communicators and noncommunicators, they can detract from those other variables--with which they are related--that one might expect to be highly related to communicatory activity. Taking the two orientations as a control, then, we found these variables independently related to communicatory activity:

Information exposure. Those persons who reported they had attended gatherings in which school matters were discussed, or who had learned something about the schools from one of the mass media (newspapers, radio, or television), also tended to engage in informal communication about the schools more often.

Direct participation. Those persons who had exerted some effort to obtain direct contact with school personnel, or to attend school activities, also tended to be informal communicators.

Sex. Females were more likely to be informal communicators. This finding is consistent with earlier findings that females are perceived to have the major role for participation in most families.

Of the effects swallowed up by the two orientations, these are the largest:

The parent orientation reduces the expected effectiveness of direct participation and age.

The citizen orientation reduces the expected effectiveness of education and voting likelihood.

The combination of parent and citizen orientations is an even better predictor of informal communicators among those who said they intended to vote "no" in the forthcoming election, among those with a high interest in nonlocal affairs, among those with a low sense of efficacy--for participating in school affairs, and among those with more education.

Looking just at the effectiveness of the parent orientation in predicting informal communicators, it is more effective among those with more children, those who intended to vote "no," and those with high information exposure.

Looking just at the citizen orientation, it is more effective in predicting communicatory activity among those with less information exposure, those with fewer children, and those with less direct participation.

Flow of Information

The flow of information--and influence--is necessarily restricted to those who communicate. Taking both the communicators in the original samples and those to whom we were referred, we can characterize them as two-thirds public school parents, one-sixth school people, and one-sixth others (preschool parents, private school parents, postschool parents, and nonparents).

The volume, or scope, of informal communication is directly related to evidences of interest. Both the parent and citizen orientations are related to all aspects of scope: total conversations, scope of topics, and scope of conversants.

(Among communicators, more stringent definitions of the two orientations were needed. High parent orientation was defined as a public school parent who belonged to a local parent group and who was very high on direct participation. High citizen orientation was defined as membership in two or more nonschool organizations.)

Since the citizen orientation was now applied only to public school parents (who comprised the majority of informal communicators), the orientations were themselves related. Those high on one orientation were more likely to be high on the other. One effect of this was that each orientation now accounted for some aspects of informal communication better in the absence of the other orientation. This held for all aspects of scope.

Information exposure, which might have been expected to increase the scope of topics among parents with interests in the local schools, failed to do so. It increased scope of topics only in the absence of the two orientations.

Public school parents who held extreme opinions about local schools did not show more scope than those holding moderate opinions. Often, those with moderate opinions showed more scope.

Parents holding favorable opinions were more likely to have more scope of topics, while those holding unfavorable opinions were more likely to have more scope of conversants.

Those who saw economic conditions as poor tended to have more scope of topics. They also had more scope of conversants, if they had a high citizen orientation. This "taxpayer" reaction was even evident among school people who saw economic conditions as poor.

School people with an interest in local affairs had more scope of conversants. Those with an interest in nonlocal affairs had less scope of conversants.

How do informal conversations get started? Five out of eight started with the respondent either giving or being given information or opinion. Three out of eight started with the respondent either seeking or being sought.

Both the parent and citizen orientations were related to the active forms of initiative: giving and seeking. This is in accord with the view of informal communication activity as an expression of interest.

Correlational analyses showed positive correlations between the different aspects of initiative to be rare. Public school parents of high parent, low citizen orientation did have some low positive correlations. We concluded that a communication leader who both gave and was given, who sought and was sought, was unlikely.

We did find two evidences of reciprocity in the correlations. To some extent, the same persons tend to both give and seek. And, the same persons tend to seek and be sought.

Public school parents who already know more about local schools were found to seek more often. Those of high parent orientation sought more often than those of high citizen orientation.

Seeking was the least used form of intiative among school people.

Public school parents who were sought out for information or opinion were more often those of high parent orientation. Citizen orientation made no difference.

Also sought out among public school parents were those with more education and those with more favorable opinions of local schools.

A higher degree of information exposure was not found to be related to being sought out among public school parents. However, it was related to being sought out among school people.

To assess direction of informal communication, we set out an ordering of presumed knowledge about local schools. The ordering was:

School people;
Public school parents;
Preschool parents;
Private school parents;
Postschool parents; and,
Nonparents.

Conversations with someone in the same group as the respondent were called horizontal conversations. Those with someone in a higher group were called vertical up conversations, those with someone in a lower group were called vertical down conversations.

One of the functions of a communication leader would be to relay information between groups, talking with someone above and below him, or with someone above or below and at the same level.

Five out of seven conversations were horizontal. Vertical up and vertical down conversations each accounted for one out of seven conversations. In any group, horizontal conversations were the most frequent. This holds even though the public school parents constitute the majority of informal communicators and might have been expected to be the conversant most often for any other group member interested in the schools.

The generally accepted observation that persons talk more to persons like themselves is thus substantiated in this study.

Both the parent and citizen orientations were related to frequency of horizontal and vertical up conversations, but not to down conversations.

Among public school parents, no variable had a positive correlation with all aspects of direction under every condition of parent and citizen orientation. Interest in nonlocal affairs did have a positive relationship among those of low parent, high citizen orientation and those of high parent, low citizen orientation.

Our correlational analyses also failed to show positive correlations among the aspects of direction themselves. Therefore, there is little possibility that the relay function is much performed by any communication leader.

Interestingly, the one relay function most likely to have been performed was that between those higher up and those lower down in the ordering, bypassing the horizontal link.

Vertical up conversations were found to be linked with conversations started by the respondent seeking.

Vertical down conversations were found to be linked with conversations started by the respondent being sought out.

These last two findings came from factor analyses of the correlations between various aspects of informal communication behavior. A separate factor analysis was made for each of six groups: Others (preschool, private school, postschool, and nonparents), four groups of public school parents (by high and low orientation levels), and school people. Excluding aspects of influence for the moment, other findings were:

Two factors appeared in each of the analyses, an active communication factor (all aspects of scope, horizontal conversations, and conversations initiated by the respondent giving) and a passive communication factor (the same aspects except that the respondent was given information or opinion to open conversations).

Neither vertical up nor vertical down conversations appeared on either major factor. They did appear, as noted above, with initiative forms of seeking and being sought, respectively--but in only three of five groups. (There are only five cases in each instance, since by definition school people could have no vertical up conversations and Others could have no vertical down conversations.)

Additional data on information flow was obtained from analyses of behavior within conversations. We looked at the proportion of all conversational content where the respondent was the communicator. We looked at the proportion of his own conversational content that was spent in giving rather than seeking. In each case we viewed such behavior in relation to the average ratios for the respondent's district.

Those public school parents who began conversations by seeking continued that behavior during the conversation. Similarly, those who began by giving tended to continue that behavior.

The parent orientation was found to be related to more seeking behavior within conversations.

The citizen orientation was found to be related to a higher proportion of communicating, rather than receiving.

Public school parents who had more vertical up conversations were more often receivers or seekers during the conversations.

Those who had more vertical down conversations were more often communicators or givers during the conversations.

Public school parents of high parent, low citizen orientation had the lowest communicator and giver ratios, indicating more reciprocity between them and their conversants during the conversations.

Those with less education and less information exposure were found to have higher ratios of communicating and giving. However, among school people, more information exposure was related positively to communicating and giving within conversations.

We also looked at whether respondents used external attributions for their statements within conversations, rather than not using them (internal attributions). And we looked at whether respondent statements were potentially verifiable or not. Again, ratios were computed relative to the average of the respondent's district.

The frequency of external attributions was found to be low, ranging from 16% to 17% over the districts studied. Verifiable content ranged from 20% to 30% over the districts. Thus, internal nonverifiable content was the most frequent. It accounted for 60% to 70% of the content.

Public school parents who had the most scope, of any aspect, tended to make more use of external attributions and of verifiable content.

Those who initiated their conversations by seeking also made more use of external attributions and verifiable content. So did those who held more horizontal conversations.

Those who had more vertical up conversations made more use of external attributions.

Those who had more vertical down conversations made more use of verifiable, but internally attributed statements.

Public school parents of high parent orientation made more use of both external and verifiable content.

Those of high citizen orientation made more use only of external, nonverifiable content. Among those low on parent orientation, this usage was greatest, pointing toward possible rumor spreading by such persons. It is the older persons and those with extreme opinions of local schools in this group who made the most use of external, nonverifiable content.

Those with more information exposure made greater use of external atrributions, particularly verifiable ones.

Those with more education made greater use of external attributions, but less use of verifiable assertions.

Among school people, external attributions were used more often by females and those who saw economic conditions as poor.

Greater use of verifiable content among school people occurred with age, less interest in nonlocal affairs, a favorable evaluation of local schools, and perceptions that economic conditions were good.

In general, we concluded, much of the flow of information can be accounted for by the levels of interest held, attributable largely to school-related roles of the communicators. Thus the flow is determined by the kinds of persons who come together, not by any communication functions undertaken. In the sections to follow, the implications of this are explored.

Flow of Influence

We had two tasks in studying the flow of influence: to locate those who were influential, and to see how influence occurred.

We continued our separate analyses of six groups--school people, public school parents divided into four groups by orientation levels, and Others. This allowed us to locate influentials. It also contributed to solving another problem.

Because the orientation levels account for much of communicatory activity, controlling for them in the analyses reduces some of the contamination between influence attempts and successes. The latter is necessarily dependent on the former, and attempts are more frequent among those who communicate more.

We viewed influence behavior in three contexts. We could infer something about it from seeing who was sought out in the initiation of conversations. We could obtain more data by seeing what kinds of persons were more likely to attempt and succeed. Finally, we could see how different aspects of informal communication behavior related to attempts and successes.

But to focus on the success of influence, we needed a tighter control on attempts. In one set of correlational analyses, the effect of attempts on successes was removed, allowing us to get a better picture of how influence success occurred. These latter analyses were used to clarify the evidence gathered in the three contexts.

Our first evidence dealt with the kinds of persons sought out to begin conversations. Potentially, these people are opinion leaders. We found that females of low parent orientation and persons with more education were more frequently sought out. However, controlling for attempts, neither kind of person was more successful than would be expected by chance.

Another kind of public school parent was also sought out to begin conversations--those of high parent, low citizen orientation with a high interest in nonlocal affairs. All were women. The correlational analyses showed that these persons were indeed more successful than would be expected by chance.

Our second set of data dealt with the kinds of persons who attempt more influence and who succeed more often.

Public school parents of high parent orientation and those of high citizen orientation both attempted influence more often and succeeded more often.

Each orientation was more highly related to attempts in the absence of the other. But each was more highly related to successes in the presence of the other.

Males of low parent, high citizen orientation had more success than females. These males also started more conversations by giving information or opinion. The correlational analyses showed that their success went beyond the scope of their attempts.

In this same public school parent group, those of low parent, high citizen orientation, more influence attempts were made by those unfavorable to the local schools. In another group, those of high parent, low citizen orientation, more attempts were made by those favorable to the schools. In both instances, however, success occurred more often among those with moderate opinions.

Among school people, those of moderate opinion were also more likely to be successful.

Our third set of data dealt with relationships between aspects of informal communication and influence.

Influence attempts and successes appeared in the active communication factor found for all groups studied, a factor that focused on the respondent's giving as a form of initiative. We concluded that in this context, any influence achieved was probably that of reinforcing opinions already held.

Influence success also appeared on several other factors:

Success seemed to go along with the respondent being sought out and his seeking from others in two groups, those of low parent, high citizen orientation and those of high parent, low citizen orientation. The correlational analyses substantiated only the relationship with being sought out, and only for group already noted--those of high parent, low citizen orientation.

Success seemed to go along with vertical down conversations among Others. The correlational analyses supported this finding.

Success also seemed to go along with vertical up conversations among those of low parent, high citizen orientation. This was not supported by the correlational analyses.

Both scope (in all its aspects) and horizontal conversations appeared on several factors with influence attempts and successes. Neither held up well in the correlational analyses.

Scope was found to be related to success after the adjustment for attempts only in the low parent, low citizen group--where scope may be seen as a substitute measure of participation in the absence of both orientations.

Horizontal conversations, after the adjustment for attempts, did not relate to influence success in the two groups where opinion leaders were most often found, those of low parent, high citizen orientation and those of high parent, low citizen orientation.

We concluded that although most influence occurred in horizontal conversations, it can not be inferred that horizontal conversations are generally more effective than other types of conversations for achieving influence success.

The possible exception to this conclusion is that horizontal conversations can be effective in achieving influence among those most--or least--involved in school matters, those of low parent, low citizen orientation and those of high parent, high citizen orientation. The conclusion holds for Others and school people.

The correlational analyses showed that school people who initiated conversations by seeking were quite successful in their influence attempts. However, seeking was seen to be the least frequently used form of initiative among school people.

Within conversation behavior also bears on successful influence. Those who seemed to reciprocate in communicating and receiving, in giving and taking, were more successful. This was particularly characteristic of the high parent, low citizen orientation group, where we found some opinion leaders who were sought out.

Influence success was found to be slightly related to greater use of external attributions and verifiable content. It was most highly related to use of external, nonverifiable content.

Public school parents of low parent, high citizen orientation with unfavorable opinions of local schools--who had more vertical down conversations--made more use of internal, verifiable content, and attempted more influence, but without success.

Similarly, those of high parent, low citizen orientation with favorable opinions--who also had more vertical down conversations--made more use of internal, verifiable content, and attempted more influence, but without success.

Those of high parent, low citizen orientation who exerted influence, after being sought, appeared to be doing so with regard to the forthcoming elections in their districts, for they attended more to election topics in their information exposures.

Our general picture of the flow of influence is largely one of values being asserted by those who have a high interest in school affairs, and being accepted by others in proportion to the amount of attempts made. The kind of influence exerted is for the most part reinforcement of values already held.

Influence occurs largely between similar types of persons. Those persons who try to influence others to more extreme views of the schools or those who try to influence persons at a different level of knowledge than themselves are generally without success. But restricting one's efforts to exert influence among like persons does not insure success. It may be necessary, but it is not sufficient.

Communication Networks

The underlying factor of interests that determines the extent of individual communicatory and influence behavior also has much to do with the nature of communication networks in school districts.

The geographical distribution of communicators did not correspond with the geographical distribution of adults in districts studied, except in areas where schools had been newly built.

The base for interests in school-related roles was reflected both in the location of most conversations and in the conversants. The most frequent location was in the home, sometimes by telephone. The most frequent conversants were: someone in the family, a friend, a neighbor, or a school person.

The conversations in the pre-election period we studied were found to be linked such that rather large networks existed by the end of the period. But some nets of rather different kinds of persons, again by interests, went into making these larger nets.

Interest in election topics increased toward the end of the period in these networks, if the respondent was seeking or was being sought out. Conversations about election topics also increased toward the end of the period for those persons who rated their knowledge of schools higher than that of their conversants.

School people tended to increase their discussion of election topics toward the end of the period. This may account for latter finding above.

Influence attempts and successes were somewhat more likely to have occurred at the beginning or at the end of the pre-election period.

Later conversations in the period were more likely to have been with a conversant the respondent expected to agree with him.

Conclusions

What had we found out about the flow of information and of influence? What could we recommend to community leaders concerned with school-community relations?

Perhaps the best way to characterize the situation we found is to point out that informal communication is more informal than might be expected. Not only is it informal in that conversations are casual, diffused largely by interests, and ineffective in converting opinions. It is also informal in two other important senses.

There is a lack of formality because of its separation from the formal decision processes in educational policy making. Personal interests dictate the focus of conversation, not the particular issues of concern to policy making.

There is a further lack of formality in the content of such conversations. We get the impression of a crossfire of opinions and information, with little formal discussion of a particular issue.

The ramifications of these informalities can be seen in the inferences we have drawn about the flow of information and of influence.

The flow of information appears to be the sum of numerous social encounters, stimulated by personal interests. There was no coherent structure of communication channels. There were few--if any--communication leaders, passing information or opinion from one interest group to another. Dissemination, and feedback, of information through these networks appears impossible by any criterion of effectiveness.

It would appear that a program of information to the general public, as a single audience, would be futile. Specific informational programs to specific publics seem indicated.

Seeking behavior, which could substitute for school initiative in disseminating information, has been seen to be currently useless. Those who did seek were the most informed. School personnel did not seek, although such efforts might have increased feedback. Those of high citizen orientation did not seek. Yet they exerted a considerable effect on dissemination of information--including some potential rumor content.

The flow of influence appears similarly diffuse, again the sum of social encounters stimulated by personal interests. Characteristically, the influence was directly related to the interest level of the respondent, usually resulting in reinforcement of a value already held rather than conversion to a new point of view.

There were, however, several conditions under which influence was more likely that may be of help to future attempts. More importantly, there were also several conditions under which influence was not likely that could help in preventing future failures.

The conditions that appear helpful for future efforts are:

1. Reciprocation seemed to help in achieving influence. Seeking and being sought were found to go together. School people who sought tended to be more influential. In the conduct of conversations, the more successful showed less dominance.

2. The opportunity for influence success seemed to be higher toward the end of the pre-election period. More success was found at the beginning and at the end of the period, but more seeking occurred at the end of the period.

The conditions that appear to warn against some efforts are:

1. Strong opinions, particularly if expressed to persons of another group, did not achieve success. Thus, for example, the use of endorsements should be reviewed.

2. While conversations with persons of the same group often appeared to be a necessary condition for successful influence, they did not appear to be a sufficient condition. Thus, for example, the reliance on personal contacts with the schools using parent spokesmen to talk to parents on behalf of school issues needs review.

In general, however, we must raise the question of whether it makes any sense to work within the present framework of informal communication. Would it not be better to increase the formality in some way?

Communication research--and communication researchers--are often looked to for "communication principles." What are the effective means for achieving influence?

Our results here have shown that different people exert different kinds of influence in different ways on different kinds of people. Experience might suggest as much. Aside from authority relationships, influence is earned by attention to situational detail.

This is not to say that communication skills are unnecessary. What would say, however, is that we are not likely to be able to prescribe any one communication technique which would be necessary and sufficient to achieve influence in any given situation.

Nor are we likely to be able to put together a compendium of communication behaviors to fit the many situations in which someone would like to exert influence.

While we do not anticipate success in these ways, we do see one communication principle inherent in successful influence. That principle is relevance.

In use, this principle of relevance acts as a criterion. It has much of its utility in telling us what will not work--that is, in avoiding boomerangs. As a criterion, relevance acts to insure that the necessary condition for influence has been met: communication.

It forces us to ask whether we have conveyed the values we hold, before we ask whether they have been accepted. And it bars us from indicting communication policies that have been effective for our inabilities to secure acceptance.

In the conversations we studied, relevance was fortuitous. It need not be.

But until communication research can tell us more about conditions affecting relevance, we shall have to adopt some alternative means, a means that encourages relevance, a means that produces more formality in in school-community relations.

About half the conversations we studied in which the forthcoming election was a topic also contained another school-related topic. This points to a problem long familiar to school leaders. Many election decisions are not on the issue stated for the referendum. Votes are cast on seemingly irrelevant issues.

The answer may be to increase the number and quality of formal relationships. If there were a formal discussion and review of each major issue, then the dangerous contamination of irrelevancy might be avoided.

The mode of these new formal relationships need not be the election. The important point is that communication behavior be relevant to a given topic at a given time.

The representational mode could be used. But it would have to be explicitly representational. The interested person would have to be aware of each stage in the formal review. (And the schools would have to adhere to a consistent procedure.) The interested person must not only have knowledge of when his representatives are available, he must also know how he is expected to express his values.

Since most important issues involve some change in educational policy, what this amounts to is an institutionalization of change procedures. If the public can expect a certain set of steps to be taken prior to a final review, if it can see when and how to participate, then it may come to understand and support the school's attempts to initiate beneficial changes.

Lastly, and importantly, if those who are looked to for guidance by the public (e.g., the mass media and community leaders) see that each important issue is met in such a way, then they may help enforce relevance in reviews of issues.

Chapter III

Between Citizens and Schools

In earlier days, it was possible for school districts to include citizens in the initiation as well as in the review of school policy making. But today citizens have relatively little opportunity to participate in the initiation of policy. Their opportunities are limited to review, to the election of board members and to financial referenda.

Ultimately, any educational issue can be reviewed where there is a vote on board representatives or support for the school program. So the voices of those citizens who do exercise the vote are powerful. But, because they are removed from the course of decision making, their voices are often frustrated and protesting.

These citizens must speak when they can. And the occasional opportunities they do have must serve as chances to voice their opinions on whatever issue is important to them--not necessarily the issue which is presented for their approval. Thus, for example, when a sample of registered voters was asked in a previous study what information they wanted during a bond issue campaign (related only to building plans), they most often wanted information on the curriculum.

Decision making requires useful information at appropriate times. Direct democracy, while it lasted, had the advantages of helping to control the timing and of allowing a joint screening of content for its usefulness. These qualities have been lost for the most part in today's school-community relations.

What substitutes for relevance of timing and of content? Both depend on when the individual citizen becomes interested in some aspect of the schools and on what he is interested in. One man's relevance may not be another's, and the school's relevance may not be the same as the citizen's.

Policies do not stir citizen interest as children and taxes do. In his role as reviewer, the citizen has consumer interests. These govern his participation and communication, and his voting behavior.

As a consumer, the citizen occupies a difficult and frustrating position. Because he evaluates the educational product of the schools, he looks for indexes of product value. But in many instances, he must wait for such evidence until the child has completed his education--or, even longer, until the child has demonstrated the value of his education. Yet he must vote now, if he is to have a voice.

This is a context of apprehension, for current signs are not secure predictors of the child's future competence. There is no present corollary of economic success, of a happy family life, of a satisfying occupation, or of a meaningful role in society. There is no means known sufficient to insure any of these desired ends for all children. What is assumed is that some means are necessary for any child to have a chance of attaining these ends.

So one of the more immediate signs that the citizen looks for is the inclusion in the curriculum and services of the schools of those areas which, through experience, have tended to lead toward achieving desired ends.

Thus, reading, writing, and arithmetic are considered necessitiies --the "fundamentals." The term is appropriate, for these language skills constitute much of social communication in any society. Without competence in them, the child has less chance of gaining many desired ends. The educational structure of a society, through which the child must progress, is itself largely constituted on these elementary skills.

The inclination to examine schools, to make sure that the essential elements are there, takes other forms. If there must be certain content in the curriculum, there must be assurance that the teacher can provide it. If certain content must be learned, the child must study (or study harder) to learn it. Teacher and pupil behaviors are signs to watch.

What does this tell us of the consumer orientation? It suggests that evaluation of the schools in these terms will yield a view that emphasizes the "indispensable" aspects of education.

Another warning sign is based on the citizen's expectation that schools can, and should, be administered on sound business and moral principles. Any sign to the contrary--by whomever sighted--may be regarded as evidence of poor management and, therefore, poor products.

In addition, there is a new set of consumer demands predicated on the highly visible competition between societies. Here special competences useful to our society are reviewed by the citizen consumer.

To be constrained, by the nature of policy making, to a consumer's role is one thing. To actively take one is another. Our research dealt with this activity--its scope and its form. Having looked at informal communication behavior (see Chapter II), we now looked at citizen contact with the schools--and, particularly, that contact dependent on mediating agencies: school boards, parent organizations, mass media, and citizens' committees.

Method

We looked at citizen contact with the schools from three different points of view, corresponding to the roles that derive from three citizen attributes: their parental status, the perceived utility of the schools, and the adult's own educational experience.

Because mediating agencies could be expected to differ from district to district, a national sample was used. We joined a national sample interview of 1500 citizens, aged 21 and over, conducted in the spring of 1964.

The sample was a quota-probability type. Geographical localities, then blocks, were sampled by strict probability methods. Within the blocks, interviewers selected respondents by quota. Within sex quotas, men were stratified by age quotas, and women were stratified by employment quotas.

No callbacks were made for not-at-homes who might have been eligible as a quota member. No attempt was made to reinterview those who refused.

This sample differed from those used in our previous work. The earlier samples were of registered voters. So some of the earlier results on participation were optimistic, given the results reported from this more representative adult sample.

A check of this sample with census characteristics for 1960 showed that it has a significant bias against rural residents.

Codification of responses was carried out during the summer of 1964. Reliabilities of the codes were assessed. Analysis was then made of the extent of citizen participation and of the relationships to consumer roles.

Results

To know the present condition of relations between citizens and their schools requires that we know the implications of the consumer orientation. In this study we saw many of them.

What education can accomplish for the child--and the adult and nation as well--are those basic competences, intellectual and social, that are seen to prepare the child for any path he may choose. In addition there are seen some economic benefits that follow directly on educational achievement.

Because they themselves may not have received all the benefits to be reaped from more education, many citizens feel they could have done better in school. Particularly, those who dropped out of high school or college feel this way.

To "finish" one's education is important. It is important enough that those citizens who did not finish high school or college (or even grade school) and who are not now satisfied with their educational preparation are more ready to blame the schools for this difficulty. They expected more than they got.

These expectations, based on the value of the educational product, go farther. Many more children are expected to finish college than will do so. And highly educated parents with such expectations but whose children are not seen as doing too well now, tend to blame the schools.

Then there are the apprehensions. Since they must wait years to obtain a final assessment of the educational product, most citizens favor proposals for national standards--for curriculum, achievement testing of pupils, and especially testing of new teachers on the subjects they will be teaching.

Further, although generally satisfied with how things are going in the local schools, six out of seven think some children are not getting as much out of school as they might.

The consumer orientation is already obvious. It becomes even more evident when we see the differences in citizen interests according to parental status, their views of the local schools' utility, and their own education.

Parental Status

We looked at the differences in citizen interests for five categories: preschool parents, postschool parents, private school parents, nonparents, and public school parents. Some of the more significant characteristics of each consumer view are summarized here.

Preschool parents. Of all groups, they are the most apprehensive of educational quality. They tend to blame the schools for student nonachievement and to take negative views of the usefulness of the mediating agencies, even though using the latter less often.

They are interested in school affairs and talk about them, but not to school people. They attend school events infrequently and vote less often (to some extent because they are younger and have not been eligible).

They are not very happy with their own education, even though it has been more recent than for other groups.

Since their children are not yet in school, they favor investments that would improve the future educational product.

Postschool parents. They see fewer benefits from education--for children as well as themselves. They do not favor greater investments in education. They see taxes as burdensome.

Proposals for national educational standards do not appeal to them.

They do not participate in school affairs, see little efficacy in participation, find little use in mediating agencies, show little interest in school matters, but they vote often in school elections.

Private school parents. They tend to like their own education, and blame themselves for any shortcomings in preparation. They see fewer benefits from public education for the child. They like the idea of testing new teachers, and they like curriculum innovations.

These appear to be bases for their sending children to private schools--under more disciplined conditions. Because they support two school systems, they feel taxes are high for what they get in return.

They view mediating agencies rather negatively, especially board functions. They think parent organizations are dominated by some element. They see more unfairness in reports on school matters by mediating agencies.

They see the newspaper as quite useful in getting information to and from the schools. They participate and feel that their participation is efficacious.

Nonparents. Having no children, they are likely to see benefits for society as a whole from education. They like testing proposals, perhaps to have a way of evaluating the educational product.

They know relatively less about school board and parent organization personnel and functions. They make use of the mass media to inform themselves. Although they do not belong to parent organizations, some belong to adult groups that they consider to be interested in education.

They show some interest in their schools but do not participate actively.

Public School Parents. They are optimistic about education, seeing many possible benefits. They view their local schools favorably, taking pride in them.

They know more about what is going on, about innovations. They know more about mediating agencies and they like the personnel and functions of boards and parent organizations. They find the board helpful.

Their contacts with schools are more direct--with school people or with agencies close to the school, like the board and parent organizations.

They participate actively and find it efficacious.

Utility

Views on the product quality (evaluation of local schools) and on product cost (burden of taxes for what is received) allow a comparison of four consumer types with respect to the utility of the schools.

High Utility. These citizens, who like their local schools and who do not find taxes burdensome, tend to see more benefits from education. Particularly, they see benefits from basic work that will prepare the child. When students do not achieve to their potential, these citizens blame the parent or the child.

They would like more money invested in public education, preferring national and local sources.

They participate actively, often directly with school personnel. They make use of mediating agencies for the dissemination and feedback of information about schools. They tend to follow the role prescriptions for interest in school matters, deviating only to participate more than called for in the perceived role.

Low Utility. These citizens, who dislike the local schools and who also think that their taxes are burdensome, have a few unique characteristics in addition to the general mirror image they present to the high utility citizens.

Although they are generally low on participation, they do show more activity in one form of participation: voting. But the activity is occasional, suggesting that the "protest vote" is not a constant factor in school-community relations.

They like grading pupils to encourage competition and the proposal for testing new teachers. And, when students are seen to fall short, they tend to blame the schools.

Grumblers. These citizens dislike the local schools but do not feel their taxes are burdensome. They, like the low utility citizens, would also like to see some testing. But they focus on testing high school students for achievement.

They tend to put the fundamentals high on the scale of education's benefits. They see economic benefits for the child from education, but not so often for themselves or the nation.

They are relatively unaware of the board--its personnel, functions, or representativeness.

Hard-pressed. These citizens like the local schools but feel their taxes are burdensome. They see fewer benefits for adults like themselves from education. But they do see economic benefits from education.

They are not likely to blame the schools for student nonachievement. They vote in financial elections and follow the role prescription for interest in school finances. They support the schools even if it hurts.

Their exposure to schools is usually indirect, unlike the high utility citizens. They make more use of the mass media, especially radio and television.

They look on the board kindly, seeing it as representative and useful for dissemination of information from the schools to citizens. It is not seen as quite so useful for feedback, however. This may be because they view it as dominated by the administration.

Educational Experiences

Citizens bring to their current evaluations and participations the experiences of their own education. Both the quantity and the quality of this experience can affect their interests.

Educational attainment. More educated citizens see more benefits from education, particularly in the basic competences--intellectual and social. The less educated are more sensitive to economic benefits--except for themselves.

The more educated have opinions of educational proposals more often. They take more pride in schools and, relatively, in students.

Concern with the curriculum is greater among the more educated citizens. They take more favorable--and more unfavorable--views of innovations in the academic curriculum. Less educated citizens are more concerned with national standards and grading practices than with the content of the curriculum.

More educated citizens tend to blame the parent or the school for student nonachievement. The less educated tend to blame the child.

Stimulus funds, to improve future public education, are favored by the more educated. They prefer local sources for increased funds. The less educated prefer national sources for increased funds.

More educated citizens are more aware of school board personnel and functions, taking favorable and unfavorable views of them. They make more unfavorable comments on board personnel. They also tend to see the administration as dominating the board, while the less educated see the board as dominant.

Parent organizations are also better known to the more educated. They are more likely to be--or to have been--members of these organizations (even though having a lower proportion of public school parents). Their negative views of such organizations focus on functions, in contrast to their views of board personnel.

Citizens committees are more likely to be seen as useful for dissemination and feedback by the more educated. The less educated like radio and television for these functions.

The more educated participate more often; they see their participation as efficacious; their interest could be increased in school affairs.

More educated citizens are more likely to disregard a role prescription for one family member to have an interest in school affairs, with both family members taking an interest.

Although they pay higher taxes, more educated citizens find their taxes less of a burden.

Satisfaction with education. By itself, citizens' satisfaction with their own educational experience does not make too much of an impact. But there are some distinctive characteristics.

The more satisfied like innovations in teaching methods. They also take more pride in teachers--and in the administration.

The more satisfied citizens are less likely to see benefits from education for adults like themselves. The less satisfied--if more educated--see economic benefits from education.

Culturally deprived students are seen by the more satisfied to be getting less than they should from their education.

More satisfied citizens tend to think pupils should be graded in order to stimulate competition.

For increased funds for public education, the more satisfied prefer state sources. The less satisfied prefer national sources.

More satisfied citizens tend to see the board as representative. They also make more use of the mass media.

The interest of dissatisfied citizens in the local schools could be increased.

Dissatisfied citizens tend to blame the child for nonachievement.

Quantity and Quality. The impact of educational attainment is sometimes affected by the perceived quality of that experience. These relationships were found:

Citizens with more education, but who are dissatisfied, see fewer benefits from education. They see more bias (in favor of the schools) in reports about schools. They also tend to have more direct contacts with school personnel.

Citizens with less education, and who are dissatisfied, see more economic benefits for themselves and for children from education. They are less likely to see a role for interest in school affairs.

Citizens with more education, and who are satisfied, see more economic benefits for the nation from education. They also see more benefits for the nation from increased knowledge. And, they take relatively high pride in the academic content of the curriculum.

High school graduates. Because there are more public school parents among citizens who finished high school, some of our results do not show regular relationships between educational attainment and citizen views and participation. The middle group, of high school graduates, has these distinct characteristics:

They are more favorable to local school instruction and administration--if satisfied with their own education. If dissatisfied, they favor innovations in facilities (perhaps they regret not having better facilities themselves).

However, they are somewhat unlikely to take pride in either the administration of local schools or in facilities.

Student nonachievement is blamed on the child.

They would like testing of high school student achievement and testing of new teachers.

They tend to prefer state sources for any new funds--if dissatisfied with their own education.

They are aware of mediating agencies available for their use. They make the most use of newspapers and parent organizations. They tend to follow role prescriptions for their interest in school affairs.

Use of Mediating Agencies

We knew from our previous work that participation in school affairs is low among citizens. But the previous estimates, based on registered voters, proved to be optimistic in comparison with the figures obtained in this study among all citizens 21 and over.

Even with the several consumer interests available for implementation through participation, many citizens do not participate. It isn't that they do not see a role for their interest; most citizens do. It seems that active participation needs a very good reason--such as a commitment on behalf of a child now in school.

That such a reason has already been found--or cannot be found--is evident in the finding that four out of five citizens say nothing could increase their interest in school affairs.

Knowing that relatively few citizens stand in close relation to the schools, we were looking in this study for information on the perception and use of mediating agencies. These agencies afford an opportunity for the uncommitted, infrequent participator to still apply his consumer criteria to school matters.

Mediating agencies were viewed as a potential means of reducing the widening gap between citizens and schools. We have summarized some results that show differences in use of these agencies by various consumer interests. What we have not summarized are the findings that bear on this possible mediating role. Here they are:

Of all the agencies available for aiding citizens to learn what is going on in the local schools, only the newspaper is seen as helpful by as many as half the citizens interviewed.

Of all the agencies that might help the schools find out what citizens think of their schools, only the newspaper and parent organization are seen as helpful by as many as one-third of the citizens.

In general, citizens know little about mediating agency usefulness, make little use of them, and only occasionally have anything specific to say about two of the more important agencies: school boards and parent organizations.

Board personnel and functions are little known. Evaluations of both tend to be made on the basis of perceived results (not of who they are or what they try to do). Two-thirds of the citizens think either the board or the administration dominates policy making. The less knowledgable think it is the board.

Those citizens who evaluate board personnel and functions favorably tend to see an even balance between board and administration. And those who see an even balance think the board is more representative of the citizenry.

Parent organization personnel and functions are even less known than the board's. However, only one-third see a dominant element in these organizations, usually the parents. Citizens who take a negative view of organization personnel and functions tend to think the schools dominate such groups. Members of such organizations think the parents dominate.

Citizens committees are nearly unknown. Only 3% evaluate their personnel; 7% evaluate their functions.

With one exception all mediating agencies are valued more for their dissemination usefulness than for their feedback usefulness. The exception is the school board.

There is relatively little criticism of mediating agencies for unfairness of their reports. What criticism there is tends toward accusations of a pro-school bias, especially with those agencies close to the schools.

Citizens who like the job their local schools are doing also tend to like the personnel and functions of the board and of the parent organizations. This could be expected, since they base the latter evaluations on the former.

The results summarized here and in previous sections suggest that mediating agencies are not often useful in the absence of opportunities for active participation. The same citizens who participate actively are the ones who make use of the mediating agencies.

There is one exception of note. The mass media (newspapers, radio, and television) are sometimes used by citizens who do not have high levels of active participation.

Conclusions

We can say with some assurance that citizens stand in relation to, not in relationship with, their schools. We can even strengthen that statement: Citizens, with varying consumer interests, stand in distant relation to their schools.

Further, there appears to be no agency that is currently bridging the gap between citizens and their schools.

Any program of improved communication in school-community relations should take cognizance of the consumer orientation of citizens and the unfulfilled need for mediation between citizens and schools. Somewhat different programs might result from emphasis on one or the other of these factors. We shall discuss both, beginning with the consumer orientation.

Coping with Consumers

Although dealing with many varied consumers poses a difficult problem in planning an improved communication program, it should be pointed out that there are some fortuitous factors that favor the schools in these consumer orientations:

For the most part, citizens blame themselves for their own educational shortcomings and their children or themselves for their children's shortcomings. Their regret for not doing better may even add to their willingness to support the schools now.

The general apathy of citizens with regard to school matters leads to a select group voting on many financial issues--those with an investment to be protected. Protest votes are occasional, not usual.

Even as more citizens do vote in school financial elections, there is a greater likelihood that those committed--and favorable--will turn out.

An important group of citizens, those hard-pressed by taxes but who think the schools are doing all right, is clearly betting on education to improve their children's future.

Yet even with the aid of these fortuities, there remains a problem of securing support for public education. To some, it is a problem of survival. The problem is not one of issues, but of people--and of consumer interests.

We shall discuss a number of ways of coping with these people and their interests in the remainder of this section. But we are going to have reservations about many of these ways, about whether they should be used at all and about their probable success. The reason for this is simple: We have reservations about leaving the situation as it is, as a problem of consumer interests rather than one of issues. But we shall come to this again in the final section. For now, here are some ways of coping with consumer interests. Many have been tried--but not always correctly or for the right reasons.

1. Issue regular reports to citizens. They may not be useful in changing any citizen attitudes toward the schools. They will probably have no use--in the present context--for informing citizens about educational issues. But these are apprehensive consumers. They expect regular reports on the conduct of the schools. If they do not receive reports, they may very likely change their attitudes--against the schools.

Citizens need reassurance, given their anxieties. Further, if the situation becomes stressful for them, they may introduce all sorts of irrelevancies into their opinions on specific financial issues. If the management is suspect, so is the product.

2. Bargain--in the open. Under present conditions, any discussion between citizens and schools is not to establish values through reaching an understanding about a situation. It is simply a confrontation

of values, subject to bargaining.

When representatives of citizens (e.g. school boards) present citizen values, they should do so in the open. For, to apprehensive citizens, the first question is whether they have been heard.

Bargaining, although expedient under present conditions, has the unfortunate byproduct of reinforcing the various consumer orientations in school-community relations. Communication is turned away from securing understanding, toward achieving acquiescence from consumer groups to school policy--or, even worse, to designing school policy that will win acceptance from consumer groups.

3. Conduct research on consumers. This suggestion is usually put another way: Conduct research on school policy among citizens. But the outcome is the same. We learn much more about consumers than we do about educational issues.

Given the nature of polling techniques most often used, what is learned about educational issues is the mere likelihood of acceptance in subsequent bargaining situations. The technique is much more productive of information on consumers. Schools can learn which citizens possess attributes likely to be useful in decisions on how to allocate resources for winning acceptance.

Citizens may not look too kindly on this more useful side of public polling, however. They could reasonably expect that it was their views, not their identities, that were to be researched. They might even consider that they had presented a mandate to be carried out by the schools.

4. Have teachers talk with parents. This could well narrow the gap between one group of citizens and the schools. That is, it could if

they were to converse successfully. What is the likelihood of their doing so? What criteria should be used to define success?

If we take the gross criterion--that the parent is more likely to acquiesce to school policy--the prospect is not good. The parent who does not already agree with school policy comes to such a meeting with an alien point of view. He (or she) has unfulfilled expectations for the child. He may have some guilt feelings for his own part in the child's nonachievement. Apart from an occasional catharsis, what can we reasonably expect to be the outcome?

If we take any finer criterion--such as an increased understanding of school policy by the parent--the prospect is much worse. Can we expect all teachers, or even a majority of them, to accomplish this difficult communication task when the parent has not come to the meeting for this purpose?

Can we reasonably expect anything more from such a conference than an occasional improvement in the child's learning situation? What about the effect on teachers from conferences where other purposes are entertained?

5. Arrange contacts with neglected groups. Several kinds of citizens have some interest in school matters, but are not now using available contacts with the schools. Specially designed approaches might work better than a general communication program for these groups:

Preschool parents, who will be the public school parents of tomorrow, are apprehensive and distrustful of school quality. And they are not being reached until they become public school parents. A special program for them seems indicated.

Postschool parents, the public school parents of yesterday, are not particularly interested in school matters any more. But they still vote. Programs that would sustain their interest after their children leave school might alleviate the conservative nature of their vote.

Nonparents have some interest in school matters, but get their information from adult organizations and the mass media. Special programs for adult organizations (service and civic clubs) could perhaps improve the quality of information they possess about schools. (In Volume I, we have discussed the possibility of controlling the rumors that seem to be characteristic of this group.)

6. Improve contacts with specific groups. There are not only some sins of omission (see 5, above), there are also some sins of commission. Many communication techniques backfire because they are used too broadly or are directed at an inappropriate audience.

Given the variety of consumer interests, it is unlikely that any one communication technique will work for all citizens and all situations. Particular groups will want particular content at particular times from particular sources.

Both this and the last suggestion have the drawback of reinforcing the existing divisions of consumer interest. As things stand, however, such views are more promising than an undifferentiated approach to communicating with the public.

7. Establish contact with latent supporters. There is one group of citizens who are potential supporters but who do not now have much contact with the schools. These citizens see no efficacy in their participation but they do think that their interest could be increased.

This contact must be initiated by the schools. These citizens do not see themselves as capable of establishing the contact (therefore, the lack of efficacy). Not only must the schools facilitate this contact, they will also have to find some way to reinforce it--to supply the means that will make this contact satisfying.

8. Campaign selectively. In the absence of a severe controversy, any campaign mounted by--or for--the schools will tend to increase the proportion of favorable voters.

Because the location of favorable voters is relatively easy (public school parents are a good bet), these campaigns are often successful in winning acquiescence to school policy. However, such campaigns may themselves generate conflict in the community, with accompanying resentment of manipulative tactics.

This technique has a companion, that of preying upon the anxieties of the consumer who has an investment in the schools (the public school parent).

The combination of campaign manipulation and fear arousal can be expected to stir up some suspicions about the management of the schools. Hence, apprehensions about the quality of the product may be quickened.

9. Make greater use of citizens committees. The use of ad hoc committees of citizens, usually initiated by the schools, has been tried frequently in recent years. The results have not been good if we take the criterion of citizen acceptance of school policy.

Financial elections are no more likely to pass with a citizens committee working than without one. Indeed, there are some boomerangs. They can evoke dormant interests unfavorable to the schools by widespread uninformed communication efforts.

There is a basic fallacy in the use of citizens' committees. They are formed to try to accomplish what school officials (the administration and school board) have not been able to accomplish. That they should not succeed should be of little surprise.

10. Make greater use of the mass media. Some important kinds of citizens use the mass media primarily for information about schools. To obtain more use seems attractive. To get more information to the mass media seems the obvious technique.

However, the mass media have other purposes than serving as a mediator between the schools and citizens. And several of these purposes diminish their usefulness.

The media rely on competition as a means of attracting audiences, and their coverage of school matters may suffer for it (in the eyes of the schools). They also see themselves as watchdogs of public monies and morals, with consequent tribulations for the schools.

Yet the informational services of the mass media could be more used. The schools can make a practice of accommodating the particular needs of the mass media. Further, they can reinforce such informational services by rewarding the media for their help--through public recognition.

11. Teach about schools in school. For all their years in schools, citizens are poorly prepared to take an interest in school affairs that will be meaningful to them and productive for the schools. Students should learn about schools and how school policy is determined just as they would learn about any other important civic agency.

Particularly, students should learn something about the functions of various school-related groups (e.g., the school board and parent organizations). Then, in the future, they may be able to see what members of these agencies are doing--or could be doing--rather than seeing only an undifferentiated image of school policy.

But this means of coping with consumer interests has the same drawback as the others. It leaves the situation as it is--consumers in distant relation to the schools. What might be done to alter the situation?

Communication and Understanding

In our introductory comments, we pointed out that the only formality in relations between citizens and schools is to be found in the occasional review of policy, by voting. As a result, most citizen participation (including that relative to policy) is informal. Such informality yields irrelevance of timing and of content in citizen communication.

Both content and timing are usually determined by citizen interests. There are few instances in which citizens contribute anything to policy except a consumer's veto.

This kind of situation can be--and has been--lived with. But is there something better? Would it not be better, for example, to decide issues on the basis of an optimum educational policy rather than on the basis of consumer demand? Can the schools find support for more than survival? Could they find support that would give impetus to educational progress?

Nine years ago we began our work on support for public education. We began with the hypothesis (and implicit hope) that public understanding leads to support for public education.

We found some evidence for this hypothesis. But we found it for the degree of understanding among informed observers in school districts, not among the citizens as a whole. From what we have seen of citizen participation, there is little to suggest that we would find support related to understanding among citizens generally.

In part, we say this because of the low level of citizen participation--and, hence, of citizen knowledge. However, we also have in mind a more specific definition of understanding than is often used. (For example, it is not unusual to hear understanding inferred as a condition whenever school policies go unchallenged.)

If we examine the concept of understanding, we can show this specific meaning. We can also show how only relevant communication contributes to understanding. Then, finally, we can consider several aspects of formality which can increase the relevance of communication between citizens and schools.

In our earlier work, we arrived at this definition of the concept of understanding:

> . . . A common perception among a group of people of the existing situation.

The most important implication of this definition is the removal of the notion of "agreement." We did not want to confuse understanding with vague notions of value consensus--particularly with reference to what should be done about a given situation.

Communication ought to be able to lead to understanding without consequent agreement on what should be done. People who understand a situation should still be able to disagree on what to do about that situation.

Given the definition of understanding relative to a situation, the functions of communication involved are to provide descriptions of situations and to provide an exchange of information that makes it possible for two or more persons to have the same situation in mind.

Relevance criteria apply to these two functions. Relevance of content determines the adequacy--and the effectiveness--of situational description. Relevance of timing determines the effectiveness of transmission efforts.

These aspects of relevance are necessary to effective communication. It does no good to transmit information to citizens who are not ready to attend to a message about a given situation. Given their consumer orientations, they may not pay any attention. Or, if they do, they may try to interpret the situation in terms of their interests, and not try to understand the situation for what it is.

Similarly, it does no good to describe a situation in less than complete terms. That is, the situation should have all of its relevant aspects described. Motives are often suspect when incomplete descriptions are made. Generally, incomplete descriptions invite idiosyncratic completion.

With our commitment to democratic procedures it becomes important that we consider means by which understanding--not fearful acquiescence--can achieve support for public education. And given the onerous problems of dealing with disparate consumer interests, it would indeed be helpful to formulate procedural guidelines that would increase the relevancy of communication between citizens and schools--and, hopefully, decrease irrelevancy.

We can dismiss the possibility of regular, direct, mass participation by citizens in educatinnal policy making. It seems obviously unworkable.

But this does not mean we need abandon the assets of regularity. Regularity of communication serves relevance insofar as it appoints a time for transmission. Procedures are still available that would achieve the same relevance of timing.

The basic problem is that when the schools are ready to talk, the citizens are not ready to listen--with respect to a given situation. The reverse is also critical. When the citizens are ready to talk, the schools are not ready to listen (or do not appear to be receptive).

The questinn is therefore: What procedures can be used to bring together the citizens and the schools so that both are prepared to communicate about the same situation at the same time?

As things stand, when both are now talking with each other at the same time it may well be the case that they are not interested in the same situation. This is exemplified by the one formal procedure used to any extent by citizens: voting. It is in voting on specific bond issues for building needs that we find irrelevant voices raised. These voices inquire about curriculum, not building needs.

In Volume I, we suggested one kind of formality to displace the informality characteristic of citizen communication. We suggested that policy determination by school officials, since it implies change, ought to be carried out through a set of procedures which--in effect--institutionalizes change in policy (or innovation).

Such a set of procedures would have the property of appointing a time for communication for each situation. Let's take an example of a sequence of procedures for a given innovation:

1. Announcement of the possibility of a change and solicitation of opinions relevant to that change.

2. A report of the discussion on initiating that change and the decision reached, along with information on the proposed time for reviewing the results of that change.

3. An announcement of the discussion that will evaluate the results of the change, soliciting relevant opinions.

4. A report on the discussion evaluating the results and the decision reached. If a second review is planned, then the time for it could be announced.

Because there may be more than one change--or contemplated change--in the works at once, any given message from the schools might contain more than one of these elements, but referring to different innovations.

This kind of standard procedure recognizes that policy initiation and review are not likely to occur at the same point in time. And it invites comment relevant to the appropriate state of innovation. It can avoid erroneous expectations and, perhaps, citizen desires to be heard on the initiation question when the discussion is already at the review stage.

There will probably be no great increase in citizen participation. However, the nature of policy determination will be more visible. Those who are interested will be able to follow it more easily.

Such a standard procedure poses a formidable reporting task, for the schools cannot reasonably expect mediating agencies to do the job. The mass media, particularly, are characteristically more concerned with decisions than with the preparation for decisions--unless controversy accompanies discussion.

The schools can help the mass media--and other mediating agencies--by holding to a standard procedure. Then the correct timing is evident. But schools must do much of this reporting themselves.

Finally, they must also provide access to the citizens who have something relevant to say. Here we might recall the consumer orientation for a suggestion on implementing more formal procedures:

It will probably be easier to formulate the procedures from the point of view of the schools--as we did above. But it will probably be more effective to express these procedures from the point of view of the citizens.

The schools can examine the kinds of situations they communicate with citizens on, and formulate their procedural needs. But then they should write a "Handbook for Citizens." This handbook, distributed to every citizen (and new citizen) would talk about the kinds of situations citizens will be (or could be) interested in, and inform citizens about the procedures that they can follow in order to be heard, or, in order to learn about the schools.

Two helpful things might follow on such an approach.

First, any person who represents the schools (e.g. a teacher or board member) could, on reading such a handbook, see just what is expected of him by citizens. They are relieved of undefined responsibilities to "communicate more" with citizens. But, at the same time, they are made aware of their responsibilities as communicators.

Second, those persons and institutions who are concerned about fair democratic procedures can come to the aid of the schools in enforcing relevancy. As long as there are specified opportunities to be heard, it is possible to impose sanctions against irrelevancy. Thus, for example, dreaded "last minute attacks" might be abhorred by those who are the intended converts.

Everyone, it seems, deplores the lack of effective communication. Sometimes--and erroneously--the perceived lack can be seen to indicate simply a failure to achieve agreement on what should be done. But even when understanding is the goal, communication still falls short.

We tend to regard such failure to achieve understanding as a problem of "different meanings." What was intended was not successfully conveyed. But is any language so prolific in significations as English really so weak? The fault may lie instead with the communicator's descriptive capability, not with the difficulties of common language usage. "Meaning" problems may, in fact, be disguised description problems.

What does it take to describe a situation? If we knew that, we could tell if a communicator had included all the elements of a situation that are relevant--and hence needed for a complete discription. We would also know more about enforcing content relevance, at least to the extent of knowing when to demand more information to obtain a complete description, and perhaps enough to lay out some formal guidelines for maintaining content relevance in discussions of educational issues.

To see what is relevant content for a discussion, we must first examine what is relevant in any situation--and thus eligible for inclusion in a description of the situation. This calls for a theoretical analysis.

We have answered this question of what is relevant in a given situation. There are three kinds of relevance for a given situation, each of which constitutes material necessary to a complete description of the situation:

1. There is situational relevance. This refers to the objects that have psychological significance to the individual viewing the situation. We commonly say that to understand each other, people must be talking about the same objects.

2. There is pertinence. This refers to the relationship between objects on a common attribute. For example, we are concerned about the comparability of objects on some dimension. Each object has some degree of pertinence, based on the extent to which it possesses the common attribute.

3. There is salience. This refers to the relationship between the individual and each object, regardless of attribute. Through experience, the individual comes to have some degree of "closeness" to the object, which is not due to the attribute which makes the objects stand in pertinent relation in the given situation. (It is this aspect of relevance which leads to hidden motives being questioned.)

For an individual to describe a given situation completely, then he must report the two objects, the attribute that makes them pertinent, the objects' pertinence values, and his salience values for the two objects. This gives seven elements to be reported. In addition, the individual may report--and often does--the discrimination he makes between the two objects. For example, he may say that one object is preferable, assuming that he is talking about alternative choices.

One must make a report to someone else--so that they may achieve coorientation. That is, he undertakes to make it possible for them to see the same situation.

Content relevance implies that understanding can occur only when one person describes a situation with sufficient fullness that another person will--in effect--see the same situation. Content relevance, like understanding, focuses on the situation.

Now it is patently obvious that such full reports are not common. The most frequent behavior is to report not the whole situation, but the discrimination made of the objects in the situation--with or without identification of the objects and the attribute involved. "I prefer this alternative" or "I prefer this alternative because it is less costly" are examples of typical reports of situations.

Unless formal guidelines for reporting are adopted, it seems unlikely that we shall attain much improvement in the relevance of content. But such guidelines are not likely to be adopted by the average citizen. However, even though he may not use them, he could still profit from their use by those who report to him. He could better understand if the situation were clearer to him.

In the previous section, we suggested formal procedures for the timing of reports. Now we have, through the criteria of relevance, formal guidelines for the content of reports.

What remains is to suggest a way of implementing the content guidelines.

The key to such implementation can be found in the unique human capability for suspending action. If needed, humans can return to the same situation at a later point in time in order to describe it more fully. They are not restricted to situations as they occur. They can work with "structured situations" of their own making.

Persons who want to make a joint decision, based on understanding, can employ coorientation techniques until they see the same situation. Then they can decide whether agreement on what to do is possible. They can refuse to bow to authority relationships and voting mechanisms as substitutes for effective communication.

Who is to establish coorientation, then? And who is to govern the procedures? For the most part, it will have to be school officials--in their own interest. But there will be instances in which mediation would be helpful. There will be educational issues which involve complex situations and aroused citizens.

The kind of mediation that is not needed is that which commonly serves to govern the confrontation of values (e.g. as in industry-labor relations). The kind of mediation needed is that which establishes coorientation by enforcing relevance.

This latter mediation is difficult. It requires that the mediating agency be in coorientation with both the schools and the citizens. It also requires that the mediating agency be free from any biasing association--for example, with the schools. For the situation is to be objectively viewed and described.

For complex situations, it appears that no existing agency is qualified for this mediation role. Even if one were to adopt the procedures necessary for the role, its objectivity would be open to challenge.

One possibility emerges: the select committee. A small number of citizens, chosen for their intelligence and objectivity, could employ the criteria of relevance to arrive at an accurate description of the situation, based on an achieved coorientation with both schools and citizens.

Their report of the situation would serve to define the limits of the situation. Thus, no credence need be paid to irrelevant considerations that later arise. Their report would not define the direction that schools and citizens should take. Rather, it would make clear what the alternatives are and allow an informed decision to be made by an understanding citizenry.

We have been discussing relevance of timing and content, and how formal procedures might improve relations between citizens and schools. Implicitly, we have been discussing the relevance of procedures as well.

Given our democratic values and our dedication to democratic means for implementing those values, the democratic procedure is the preferred procedure. And sometimes, as we have suggested here, it is the most effective procedure.

Chapter IV

The Structure of School-Community Relations

There are many factors that could affect some aspect of school-community relations. To enumerate these factors, to assess their impact on important aspects of school-community relations is to study the structure of school-community relations.

What we did in this study was to establish the boundaries of the structure, to include those factors which were found to be important components and to exclude those which were unimportant--or redundant to an important component. In doing this, we were able to show how certain factors went together, so that we obtained information on the organization of factors within the structure.

We had made an earlier effort in this direction (Communities and Their Schools). However, there were serious shortcomings in that approach that needed correction, given adequate resources to make those corrections. These shortcomings, and our subsequent changes in approach, were:

1. The listing of potential factors was incomplete. We had first used the testimony of local observers to establish the listing. The greatest fault in this technique was the tendency to obtain broadly defined factors, within which divergent factors might be subsumed. In our later effort, we attempted to extend the listing by enumerating these factors at a more specific level.

2. The criteria for including or excluding factors as important components were inadequate. We used local testimony as evidence, with a partial check on judgments afforded by the history of financial

support in the districts. The proper methodology, which we adopted in this study, was to obtain independent estimates of the presence--or absence--of each factor and of the presence of each aspect of school-community relations which we regarded as an important criterion, then to obtain an estimate of the relationship between them. In this way, an unbiased estimate of the factors' impact was available.

To introduce this summary of our findings on the structure of school-community relations, we must review our conceptualization of these approaches.

The earlier study had produced a listing of 162 potential factors in school-community relations. But most of these were not specific. For instance, educational characteristics of the district population generally implied average education in the eyes of most observers we questioned. But other educational factors could be adduced (e.g., the discrepancy between mean and median educational level).

The lack of specificity became more obvious as we searched for objective measures of each potential factor. Did district financial capability imply average personal income? Or average family income? Or per capita retail sales? Or the ratio of the district average to the state average on any of these?

Working with the literature and the advice of colleagues, we emerged with a listing of well over a thousand potential measures of factors in school-community relations. Then we began to prune the list. We used four criteria: observability of the factor, previous use in educational research, importance accorded the factor in the educational literature, and reported experiences of administrators.

By this time we were referring to a listing of variables, not factors. For some of these might be measuring the same factor. One of the functions of our analysis was to be the assessment of such common content among the variables.

We regrouped the variables into 26 divisions, within which we would assess common content. Our final total of variables was 860, each of which was to be examined to see if it should be included or excluded.

The decision on inclusion or exclusion was to be made primarily on the basis of each variable's relationships to criteria of school-community relations. These too were reconceptualized from the earlier study.

In our first study we had used the success or failure record of school districts in financial elections as the criterion of school-community relations. Although it is of some practical importance to view success in financial elections as an indicator of prevailing relations, there is a danger in taking only this view. A factor may have some impact on relations that is all for the good (or bad) but the impact may not be visible if we use only this one criterion.

We used four criteria of school-community relations, assessing the relationship of each variable against all four. If any variable had a significant correlation with any of the four, we retained the variable as an important component of the structure of school-community relations. (Since we were also studying the relationships among variables in each of the 26 divisions, we could omit some variables as redundant to others--if they had a positive correlation with the others and had similar patterns of relationship to the criterion variables.)

The definitions we used for these four criterion variables are as follows:

Acquiescence: The degree to which voters in school districts review financial issues favorably. It was measured as the percentage of voters who voted "yes" on an issue. The percentage was adjusted according to the type of election held--bond, tax, or budget. The adjustment was made on the basis of national averages for the type of election. (For example, budget elections usually have a higher proportion of "yes" voters than bond or tax elections. Districts holding only budget elections would be adjusted downward on this criterion.)

Participation: The degree to which voters in school districts exercise their right of review in school elections. It was measured as the percentage of eligible voters who turned out to vote in school elections of all kinds. This percentage too was adjusted according to the national average for a given type of election.

Understanding: The degree to which informed observers in a school district perceive factors affecting the school-community relationship the same way. (This distinguishes it from total agreement, which implies that they perceive a similar course of action as well as agreeing on the current situation.)

This was measured by assessing the degree of common perception among each pair of observers regarding the impact locally of 169 factors. Ten observers were questioned: the superintendent, board president, four board members, a teacher representative, a parent representative, a mass media representative, and an interested citizen. (Where possible, we selected an interested citizen who held a critical view of the local schools. We also asked for elected teacher and parent representatives.)

Quiescence: The degree to which controversy and conflict are lacking in a school district. We measured it as the degree to which potential factors in the district were seen to be inoperative, using only joint perceptions by pairs of informed observers as an index of factor dormancy. That is, informants had to agree that a factor was inoperative before we accepted the judgment.

Methods

Prior to beginning the steps necessary to collecting the data, we brought together an advisory group of educational leaders to review our conceptualization, and to discuss the procedures to be used in collecting the data. They aided in cutting down the list to 860 variables, and they made valuable suggestions on obtaining the data from school districts.

Our next step was to sort out the variables according to the optimum source of information for each variable. Census data and school records took care of many. But we found it necessary to consider questioning individuals in school districts who held key roles in school-community relations. These persons were the only source possible for some variables. For example, only an informed observer could report on the tact displayed by board members in their relations with the public. And other information could be more efficiently gathered by personal interview (given that one had to be conducted anyway with certain persons). For instance, we could question board members directly about their own background in education rather than asking for the information from the school administration.

We then constructed special data gathering instruments for each source of information. Each instrument was pretested in three districts where we would be conducting the study.

The instruments used were:

Questionnaires--separate sets of questions for the district superintendent, the board president, four board members, a teacher representative, a parent representative, a mass media representative, and an interested citizen.

An Inventory--a listing of the 169 areas to which each of the ten informants named above responded with perceptions of whether the area had an impact on local school-community relations, and whether the impact was judged favorable or unfavorable.

Factual questionnaires--two sets of questions sent to the district administration for information that would be available in the school records. (That is, if it were available at all. Many districts, though willing to cooperate, could not furnish all the information requested.)

Some information not furnished from school records was obtained for us by national research agencies who sent local representatives to alternative sources. Mostly this was information on election results, essential to our measures of acquiescence and participation.

The pretesting of procedures for abstracting information from census sources made it clear that we had to develop bases for estimating district data when, as often occurred, the district was not coterminous with a census unit or when data was not reported for the same unit in different census years.

Our earlier study had been designed to explore the boundaries of school-community relations. We used there a purposive sample of school districts. In this study we wanted to draw inferences concerning the impact of each potential factor (i.e. variable). So we wanted a probability sample of school districts.

The Bureau of the Census drew a sample of 180 districts from its records on U.S. school districts with 150 pupils or more. Thus the sample, as selected, was representative of districts in which about 97% of the pupils were enrolled in 1960.

School districts were randomly selected, but with probability of selection proportional to pupil enrollment. In this sense, then, the sample was more representative of the conditions under which pupils receive their education than it was of conditions in the average school district. All the very large districts were included by this procedure. And relatively fewer very small districts were included.

From the census data, we were able to secure information for all of the 180 districts on applicable district characteristics. We also obtained all the available data on elections for every district--but here we sometimes had to get the data from nonschool sources, because we did encounter districts that would not participate in the study.

The number of districts varied for the data available on other variables. Our best record was 154 districts responding. For some variables, the total fell as low as five or ten--because of restricted applicability or lack of records.

A number of preliminary analyses were made of item sets. These were designed as potential indexes and were viewed as constituting one variable each. Using scale analysis (Guttman) procedures, we ascertained whether every item in a designated set was indeed tapping the same dimension. These procedures were applied to assessment indexes and to selected school characteristics (e.g., scope of transportation services).

Following these preliminary analyses, the following analyses were made for each of the 860 variables:

1. Calculation of the mean and median;

2. Calculation of the standard deviation and skewness;

3. Calculation of the correlation with each of the four criterion variables, and of the significance of each correlation (given the number of cases for which data were available); and,

4. A factor analysis of the relationships between variables in a given division--with separate analyses for subdivisions of the massive community characteristics division.

Results

In this summary we shall only present a listing of those variables found to have a significant relationship with one or more criterion variables. The listing is further restricted in that we have not included any variable for which another variable appears--from the analyses--to account for its relationship. (Thus, any variable that is asterisked in the following listing represents one or more redundant variables.)

The results of the factor analyses, as they bear on the organization of variables in the structure, are not summarized. They are too extensive for summary. Further, the summary of the second part of this study (see Chapter V) provides a more economical statement of the more important component clusters.

The summary is arranged by the criterion variable(s) with which significant relationships were observed. Numerical references are to divisions (I to XXVI) and variable orderings within districts. Capital letters in parentheses indicate the source of an assessment (e.g., S for superintendent; BP for board president, P for parent representative; T for teacher representative; O for interested citizen).

Variables significantly correlated with understanding only (Positive)

I:4	No. of years experience as a superintendent
I:28	Administrator-parent relations (S)
I:30	Superintendent reaction to criticism
I:32	Administrator-parent relations (P)*
I:52	Superintendent as a school leader (BP)*
I:53	Superintendent as a school leader (T)*
III:3	Purpose of retarded student program: training in personal care
V:4	Parent-teacher conferences: preparation given teachers
V:12	Teacher satisfaction
V:41	Percent of teachers living in district
V:42	No. of community leadership positions held by teachers
XII:31	No. of informational publications for general public
XIII:13	Parent group participation with schools in financial election campaign

Understanding, positive--cont.

XIV:6	Citizen opinions allowed at board meetings
XV:12	Relationship between communities within district
XV:27	1960 per capita retail sales
XV:28	Ratio of district per capita retail sales to state per capita retail sales, 1960
XV:98	1960 percent managers and officials
XV:141	Ratio of 1960 ratio of district to state percent in 5-14 age group to 1950 ratio
XVI:5	Citizen knowledge of school needs (BP)
XVI:7	Citizen knowledge of school needs (P)
XVII:1	Lack of criticism on meeting community needs
XVIII:6	Citizen pride in schools*
XXI:9	Favorable outcome of official investigations
XXI:10	Employer satisfaction with local school product
XXII:2	Average age of board members
XXII:18	Board educational goal: give children sense of cultural heritage
XXII:42	Teacher evaluation of board members
XXII:43	Parent evaluation of board members
XXIII:19	Voter registration by citizens' committee

Variables significantly correlated with understanding only (Negative)

1:20	Superintendent attitude toward religion and public schools
II:12	Student misconduct in the classroom (T)
II:30	Student misconduct in the classroom (P)*
III:12	Adult education program: percent devoted to citizenship training
V:23	Percent of teachers in local union
X:4	Teacher participation in budget preparation

Understanding, negative--cont.

XV:36	Ratio of district heterogeneity of income to state heterogeneity of income, 1960
XV:134	Ratio of district mean-median age discrepancy to state discrepancy, 1960
XV:176	1960 percent born in Southern Europe
XV:208	Ratio of 1950 percent of total population with high school education to 1940 percent
XV:246	Ratio of 1950 reciprocal of fertility ratio to 1940 reciprocal of fertility ratio*
XVII:6	Individual criticism of school administration (O)
XVII:17	Individual opposition use of letters to newspapers*
XVIII:8	Optimistic citizen attitude toward business outlook
XIX:7	Large taxpayers as absentee landlords
XIX:8	Opposition to school policy by large taxpayers
XX:10	Action on school issues by political parties
XXI:8	No. of official investigations of schools
XXII:59	Board attitude on religion and public schools
XXIV:14	Lack of responsibility by mass media (BP)
XXIV:24	Mass media in "watchdog" role

Variables significantly correlated with quiescence only (Positive)

II:21	Elementary student rank on national spelling test
II:25	Secondary student rank on national science test
IV:3	Scope of transportation services
IV:9	Counselor-pupil ratio
VIII:33	Teacher dismissal: tenure policy
XIV:10	Permissiveness on community use of school facilities

Quiescence, positive--cont.

XV:48	Ratio of district percent employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing to state percent, 1960
XV:95	1960 reciprocal of percent living in different house than previous year, within U.S.*
XV:103	1960 percent farmers and farm managers
XV:201	Ratio of 1960 percent of total population with college education to 1950 percent*
XXII:21	Covert action by board on major decisions
XXIV:18	Presenting both sides of issues as purpose of mass media

Variables significantly correlated with quiescence only (Negative)

I:12	No. of offices held by superintendent in local, nonprofessional organizations*
I:14	Coordination with other educational officials
II:4	Participation in student programs
II:9	Student participation in discipline
II:17	No. of athletic events scheduled weekday nights
II:27	Percent of eighth graders entering ninth grade
II:37	Pupil-teacher ratio, 9-12
III:6	Purpose of gifted student program: acceleration
III:18	Purpose of summer school program: enrichment
III:22	Audio-visual facilities
III:27	No. of current NDEA experimental programs
III:29	No. of other innovations*
IV:1	Scope of guidance program*
IV:4	Health services: organization
IV:10	Transportation: no. of accidents

Quiescence, negative--cont.

V:9	Staff running for political office*
V:20	Negotiation by professional organization (dismissal or tenure)
V:21	Negotiation by professional organization (profession, policies, training)
V:26	Individual teacher participation in district elections*
V:43	No. of group contributions by teachers to community
V:47	Group teacher participation in election campaigns
V:51	Percent of grades K-6 teaching with any degree
VI:2	In-service training for maintenance staff
VI:8	Non-teacher staff organization
VI:16	Percent of central office staff with a college degree
VIII:12	Teacher salary levels: no. of criteria used
VIII:18	Teacher dismissal: build case for not renewing contract (T)
VIII:31	Teacher hiring: written exam
VIII:35	Percent of teachers promoted from within district
VIII:36	Classroom use of community resource persons
IX:8	Basis for pupil evaluation: norm for grade level
X:1	No. of long range planning studies
X:18	Business procedures: no. of estimates on nonbid items
X:20	Open hearing on budget*
XI:19	No. of endorsements important to campaign
XI:21	Campaign organization
XI:25	No. of tax levy restrictions
XII:1	School use of public meetings
XII:27	No. of informational publications*
XII:32	School use of mass media

Quiescence, negative--cont.

XIII:4	Bulletins published by parent groups*
XIII:12	Parent group participation in financial election campaign
XIV:5	Provision for reporting board action to public
XV:42	Ratio of 1960 ratio of district to state imbalance toward high income to 1950 ratio
XV:65	Percent employed in services, 1960*
XV:186	Ratio of 1950-60 district to state percent population increase ratio to 1940-50 district to state ratio
XV:233	Ratio of district median educational level to state median level, 1960
XV:256	1960 percent population in urban place
XV:262	1960 rank on isolation index* (less isolated)
XV:268	1960 percent using auto transportation
XVII:15	Individual opposition use of radio/TV discussions
XVII:24	Organized opposition use of radic/TV discussions
XIX:1	Informal advice on school policy by business leaders
XIX:12	Opposition to school policy by civic officials*
XX:2	Informal advice on school policy from labor unions*
XX:4	Religious groups represented on board
XX:19	Support on school issues by civic and service clubs*
XXI:3	No. of school conflicts with civic institutions
XXII:6	No. of board members with teaching experience
XXII:44	Board member selection method: elected
XXII:46	Years between board elections
XXII:49	Date requirement for board election
XXIII:3	Purpose of citizens' committee: policy issues
XXIV:4	No. of mass media covering school news*

XXIV:9	Mass media support of schools during controversy
XXIV:10	No. of problems in checking stories (S)
XXIV:13	Extent of checking stories by mass media (BP)
XXIV:23	Awards given local media for school coverage
XXVI:4	No. of special sources for outside advice
XXVI	No. of sources outside district for national criticisms heard locally*

Variables significantly correlated with acquiescence only (Positive)

I:6	No. of years superintendent taught in district
I:16	Superintendent's personal goal: administration outside education
II:34	Percent of students in honor society
IV:7	School relations with welfare organizations: coordination
XII:30	No. of informational publications for staff
XIII:2	Activities undertaken by parent groups
XIV:9	No fees for community use of school facilities
XV:35	1960 heterogeneity of income
XV:68	Ratio of 1950 percent employed in services to 1940 percent
XV:74	Ratio of 1950 percent employed in professions and administration to 1940 percent
XV:131	1960 mean-median age discrepancy
XV:190	Ratio of 1950 percent employed in construction to 1940 percent
XV:195	1960 percent of population attending school
XV:261	Ratio of 1950 percent employed in sales, clerical and kindred to 1940 percent
XV:269	1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area
XVI:8	Board meetings: media attendance permitted
XVII:18	Lack of organized opposition in last financial election

Acquiescence, positive--cont.

XVII:33	Conservative elements: religious
XX:12	Percent of Democrats in district
XXII:10	Board policy on teacher grievance
XXII:24	Years needed to change board majority
XXII:48	Area represented by board members: ward
XXII:	Understanding among board members**

Variables significantly correlated with acquiescence only (Negative)

I:49	Superintendent's educational goal: prepare children for citizenship
II:1	Invitational social clubs for students
V:52	Percent of grades 7-8 teachers with any degree*
VIII:16	Teacher hiring: no. of people involved
XIII:16	Extent of parent group participation in financial election campaign
XV:59	Percent employed in manufacturing, 1960
XV:148	Ratio of 1950 ratio of district to state percent age 21 or over to 1940 ratio
XVII:14	Individual opposition use of public meetings
XIX:9	Opposition to school policy by business leaders
XXIV:11	No. of reporters regularly assigned to cover school news

Variables significantly correlated with participation only (Positive)

V:15	Overall individual teacher participation in school elections
V:30	Individual teacher participation in tax elections

**This variable also has an artifactual (part-whole) relationship with the criterion of understanding.

Participation, positive--cont.

V:31	Individual teacher participation in budget elections
XI:33	Salary increases emphasized in campaign (BP)*
XIII:14	Ratio of schools to parent groups
XV:22	Ratio of district per family income to state per family income, 1960*
XV:105	Ratio of percent professional or technical to percent managers, officials, clerical, and sales, 1960
XV:187	Ratio of 1950-1960 percent population increase to 1940-50 percent population increase
XV:191	Ratio of 1950-60 percent employed in construction ratio to 1940-50 ratio
XV:200	Ratio of district percent of total population with college education to state percent, 1960
XIX:3	Large taxpayers represented on board
XX:9	Opposition to school policy by agricultural groups
XXVI:7	No. of sources inside district for national criticisms heard locally

Variables significantly correlated with participation only (Negative)

II:16	No. of athletic events scheduled weekdays after school
II:33	Lack of high school dropouts
VII:11	Ratio of 1960 to 1950 pupil enrollment
VII:14	Ratio of 1960 to 1950 district population*
VIII:28	Discussion of evaluation with teacher
X:16	Business procedures: use of cost accounting
XIV:7	Citizen questions allowed at board meetings
XV:30	Ratio of 1950 per capita retail sales to 1940 per capita retail sales
XV:114	Ratio of 20-29 age group in 1960 to 10-19 age group in 1950*

XV:181	1960 percent born in Latin America
XV:184	Percent population increase, 1950-60
XV:206	Ratio of district percent of total population with high school education to state percent, 1960
XV:270	Ratio of 1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area to 1950 ratio
XVI:1	Major social event to which parents invited: academic
XVII:23	Organized opposition use of public meetings
XVII	Conservative elements: reactionary
XXII:8	No. of board members with children
XXIII:18	Transportation service to polls by citizens' committee

Significant Correlations with Two Criterion Variables

Positive with understanding and negative with quiescence

I;29	Implementation of board decisions: superintendent reaction to accomplished change
XV:194	Ratio of percent of population in annexed area to percent population increase, 1950-60
XX:21	Support on school issues by labor unions
XXIV:8	Mass media support of schools in last election

Negative with understanding and positive with quiescence

XV:230	Ratio of 1960 district to state mean educational level ratio to 1950 district to state ratio

Negative with understanding and negative with quiescence

XIV:2	Board contact with public*
XV:9	Extent of neighborhood factions
XVI:3	No. of special interest groups attending board meetings*
XXIII:1	Citizens' committee on school affairs

Positive with understanding and positive with acquiescence

I:31	Superintendent reaction to proposed change
XV:44	Ratio of district mean-median income discrepancy to state mean-median discrepancy, 1960*

Negative with understanding and positive with acquiescence

XV:46	Ratio of 1960 ratio of district to state mean-median income discrepancy to 1950 ratio.

Negative with understanding and negative with acquiescence

XVII:8	Individual criticism of expenditures (0)
XVII:9	Individual criticism of tax level (0)
XVII:11	Individual criticism of board (0)
XVII:35	No. of organized critic groups (S)
XVII:37	Organized opposition use of last minute attacks*
XXII:16	Board educational goal: prepare children for citizenship
XXII:53	No. of situations where board disagrees*

Positive with understanding and negative with participation

X:13	Property assessment: selection of assessor locally*
XII:22	Information procedures for teachers
XII:23	Information procedures for parents

Negative with understanding and positive with participation

XI:28	No. of unanswered citizen questions in campaign
XVII:46	Individual criticism of teacher capability (BP)

Positive with quiescence and positive with acquiescence

I:47	Superintendent-baord understanding**

**This variable is artifactually correlated (part-whole relationship) with understanding.

Positive quiescence and positive acquiescence--cont.

VIII:22	Teacher dismissal: immediate firing (S)
XV:47	Percent employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, 1960
XV:104	1960 percent farm laborers and foremen

Negative with quiescence and negative with acquiescence

VIII:2	Teacher salary: ratio of highest to lowest, grades 7-8*
VIII:27	Evaluation shown to teacher
XI:9	Use of telephones to increase voter registration*
XI:29	Extent of emphasis on needs in campaign (P)*
XI:30	Duration of tax levy extension*
XV:11	No. of communities within district
XXII:3	Average educational level of board members

Negative with quiescence and positive with participation

XVII:50	No. of organized critic groups (BP)

Negative with quiescence and negative with participation

I:21	Communication with power structure
VII:10	Ratio of 1950 to 1940 pupil enrollment
XIII:1	Parent representation at state PTA meetings
XV:60	Ratio of district percent employed in manufacturing to state percent employed in manufacturing, 1960
XV:89	Ratio of 1960 reciprocal of percent living in different house than previous year, within county, to 1950 reciprocal*

Positive with acquiescence and positive with participation

V:36	Individual teacher campaign participation: public discussions

Positive with acquiescence and negative with participation

I:24	Superintendent's social contacts with power structure
I:55	Administrator-teacher relations: staff morale (S)
VII:9	District dependence on federal aid
XV:192	Ratio of annexed area in the decade 1950-60 to area in 1950
XXV:9	Percent of district operating income from state aid

Negative with acquiescence and positive with participation

X:12	Budget reviewing agency: no. of other functions
XI:2	Salary increases emphasized in campaign (S)*
XV:125	1960 median age*

Significant Correlations with Three Criterion Variables

Positive with understanding and acquiescence, negative with participation

I:22	Agreement with power structure

Negative with understanding, quiescence, and acquiescence

XI:24	Extent of emphasis on needs in campaign (S)*
XV:10	No. of specific rivalries among neighborhood factions*
XVII:41	Organized opposition use of letters to newspapers*
XVII:48	Individual criticism of tax level (BP)
XXII:12	Average time devoted to board business by board members

Negative with quiescence and acquiescence, positive with participation

XI:12	Use of letters and postcards to get out parent vote*

Significant Correlations with Four Criterion Variables

Negative with understanding, quiescence, acquiescence; positive with participation

XI:6 Disagreement among school representatives in campaign

XVII:49 Extent of individual criticism of schools (BP)*

Conclusions

What had we accomplished? Well, several things stand out. We had reconceptualized somewhat vague designations of 162 potential factors in school-community relations into 860 specific, observable variables. We had tested their potential effects objectively, such that we had found 256 variables with some claim to importance in that they had significant relationships with one or more of four criteria of school-community relations.

Further, we had data that could be utilized to study the process of school-community relations. And this was to be done. We also had data that could be useful to other researchers. (One study has already been done using the data. Another study in progress is making use of this data.)

We concluded that district school leaders could also make use of these findings, in the diagnosis and solution of district problems. Our closing comments deal with these problems.

When a general sense of "something is wrong" is noted by a district, the next step demands that the difficulty be located. With so many things that could affect school-community relations, it is of considerable help to have the possibilities limited.

Just as helpful, perhaps, is the opportunity for the district to reconsider any concern that has been focused on a variable that does not appear here to be an important factor in school-community relations. (It may still be concerned with the characterisitc, but less for any impact on school-community relations.)

Having obtained a diagnosis, some priorities can be set out for ways of altering local conditions. Many of the variables we studied are different ways of attempting to achieve better degrees of acquiescence, participation, understanding, or quiescence. Now some estimates are available for comparison with regard to their probable efficacy.

Additional considerations of resources--in time, money, and personnel--can be used to choose among the possible avenues of successful alteration.

Finally, however, we should point out that these data furnish a basis for enlightened trial and error procedures. The information that is forthcoming in the next chapter will provide more helpful direction to district efforts.

Chapter V

The Process of School-Community Relations

From an initial collection of 860 possible factors in school-community relations and four criteria of those relations, we conducted a set of reductive analyses to examine the process of school-community relations.

Method

We began with a correlational analysis, testing each of the 860 variables for significant relationships with one or more of the criterion variables. Then we factor analyzed groups of these 860 variables by divisions. The result was some 256 variables that appeared to be possible factors in school-community relations.

We followed with further factor analyses, of those variables that were similarly related to a criterion variable--positively or negatively. On the basis of these analyses, we selected 77 variables for further analysis (22 related to understanding, 16 related to quiescence, 20 related to acquiescence, and 19 related to participation).

These 77 variables seemed most likely to be functionally related to one of the criteria of school-community relations--or seemed to represent conditions that would have a functional relationship. Each of the four sets was subjected to multiple regression analysis, and ten variables from each were assessed as the most important contributors to the respective criterion variables.

Some important clarifications of functional relationships emerged. For instance, median age of population was found to be positively related to acquiescence--if the proportion of the population in school was controlled.

Having established that understanding, quiescence, and participation each had a significant relationship to acquiescence, but none to another, we inferred three patterns of support:

1. Acquiescence through understanding, based on open communication channels, effective communication techniques, and relevant content of communication.

2. Acquiescence through quiescence, based on demand for educational services in a nonconflict context.

3. Acquiescence through lower participation, based on effective control mechanisms and district stability.

Finally, we examined each of the 40 most important variables in the context of the four criterion variables, showing the bases for patterns of support, further clarifying functional relationships between variables and the criteria, locating districts that are successful in the absence of patterns of support, and locating districts where the means for the pattern of support are present but success is lacking.

What we have to report in summary are a number of functional relationships important to the process of school-community relations, and several general observations on the process as a whole.

Before turning to that summary, however, it should be pointed out that we occasionally lacked sufficient data to follow up potentially important conditions. Sometimes the problem was that schools did not have the data themselves--a point that needs some attention in the future. In several other cases, a technique was employed by a minority of the districts, so that further use of the technique or a larger survey would be necessary for adequate study.

The listing that follows gives the variables that would repay future efforts to collect more data--given their significant criterion relationships for small samples of districts:*

V:4	Parent-teacher conferences: preparation given teachers (+U)
XII:31	No. of informational publications for general public (+U)
XV:12	Relationship between communities within district (+U)
XXI:9	Favorable outcome of official investigations (+U)
II:21	Elementary student rank on national spelling test (+Q)
II:25	Secondary student rank on national science test (+Q)
II:1	Invitational social clubs for students (-A)
II:34	Percent of students in honor society (+A)
V:36	Individual teacher campaign participation: public discussion (+A)
XI:30	Duration of tax levy extension (-A)
XII:30	No. of informational publications for staff (+A)
XVII:14	Individual opposition use of public meetings (-A)
XVII:37	Organized opposition use of last minute attacks (-A)
XVII:41	Organized opposition use of letters to newspapers (-A)
XXII:48	Area represented by board members: ward (+A)

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*The parenthetical suffix indicates the criterion with which the variable is related--or most highly related--and the direction of the relationship.

X:12	Budget review agency: no. of other functions (+P)
XVII:23	Organized opposition use of public meetings (-P)

Understanding

Results

From the results of the factor analyses and the subsequent multiple regression analysis, these ten variables appeared as the most important indicators of understanding:

Positive indicators

XII:23	Information procedures for parents
I:4	No. of years experience as superintendent
I:53	Superintendent as a school leader -- T
XVIII:6	Citizen pride in schools
XV:194	Ratio of percent of population in annexed area to percent population increase, 1950-60

Negative indicators

II:30	Student misconduct in classroom -- P
XVII:6	Individual criticism of school administration -- O
XV:9	Extent of neighborhood factions
XV:36	Ratio of district heterogeneity of income to state heterogeneity of income, 1960
XXIV:24	Mass media in "watchdog" role

Size of district is significantly related only to XV:9 (Extent of neighborhood factions).

Further analysis in the context of acquiescence conditions removed XXIV:24 (Mass media in "watchdog" role) from any functional relationship with understanding. The obtained relationship is an artifact of the relationship between understanding and acquiescence.

This last analysis also showed that three of the variables have only a functional relationship with understanding--with no part played in the pattern of support based on understanding: I:4 (No. of years experience as superintendent), XV:36 (Ratio of district heterogeneity of income to state heterogeneity of income, 1960), and XV:194 (Ratio of percent of population in annexed area to percent population increase, 1950-60).

Quiescence

The factor analysis and multiple regression analysis yielded these ten variables as the most important indicators of quiescence:

Positive indicators

XXII:21	Covert action by board on major decisions
XV:47	1960 percent employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing
XXIV:18	Presenting both sides of issues as purpose of mass media

Negative indicators

V:21	Negotiation by professional organization: profession, policies, and training
XIX:1	Informal advice on school policy by business leaders
XV:42	Ratio of 1960 ratio of district to state imbalance toward high income to 1950 ratio
XV:9	Extent of neighborhood factions
XXII:6	No. of board members with teaching experience
XXI:3	No. of school conflicts with civic institutions
XV:186	Ratio of 1950-60 district to state percent population increase ratio to 1940-50 district to state ratio

Size of district is significantly related to three of the negative indicators: XV:9 (Extent of neighborhood factions), XXI:3 (No. of school conflicts with civic institutions), and XXII:6 (No. of board members with teaching experience).

Analysis in the context of acquiescence conditions showed that three of the variables should be regarded as having artifactual relationships with quiescence: XV:9 (Extent of neighborhood factions), XV:186 (Ratio of 1950-60 district to state percent population increase ratio to 1940-50 district to state ratio), and XXIV:18 (Presenting both sides of issues as purpose of mass media).

Four of the variables have a functional relationship only with quiescence: V:21 (Negotiation by professional organization: profession, policies, training), XV:42 (Ratio of 1960 ratio of district to state imbalance toward high income to 1950 ratio, XIX:1 (Informal advice on school policy by business leaders), and XXI:3 (No. of school conflicts with civic institutions). They play no part in the pattern of support based on quiescence.

Acquiescence

These ten variables emerged as the most important indicators of acquiescence from the factor analyses and the multiple regression analysis:

Positive indicators

I:22	Agreement with power structure
XV:190	Ratio of 1950 percent employed in construction to 1940 percent
XV:269	1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area
XVII:33	Conservative elements: religious

XV:195	1960 percent of population attending school

Negative indicators

XI:24	Extent of emphasis on needs in campaign -- S
XVII:9	Individual criticism of tax level -- 0
XXII:53	No. of situations where board disagrees
XXII:16	Board educational goal: prepare children for citizenship
XV:74	Ratio of 1950 percent employed in professions and administration to 1940 percent

Size of district is significantly related--negatively--to three of the variables: XV:190 (Ratio of 1950 percent employed in construction to 1940 percent), XV:195 (1960 percent of population attending school), and XV:269 (1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area).

We viewed each of the ten in the context of the other three criterion variables. Six hold up under all conditions: I:22 (Agreement with power structure), XI:24 (Extent of emphasis on needs in campaign -- S), XV:269 (1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area), XVII:9 (Individual criticism of tax level -- 0), XVII:33 (Conservative elements: religious), and XXII:16 (Board educational goal: prepare children for citizenship).

The 1940-50 increase in professionals and administrators (XV:74) is related to acquiescence only in the low participation condition--where the criticism expected of these kinds of citizens would have the most impact.

The 1940-50 increase in construction (XV:190) is not related to acquiescence in the low quiescence condition. The demand for educational services implied works for the schools except in conflict situations.

The 1960 proportion of population attending school (XV:195) is negatively related to acquiescence when conflict is present, and unrelated in the low conditions of understanding and participation. It is an important component of the pattern of support based on quiescence. Further, because it is related to acquiescence in the high condition of participation, it suggests a condition of selective turnout--of public school parents--that achieves acquiescence without needing low participation. Conflict must be absent, however.

The number of situations where the board disagrees (XXII:53) holds only in the low condition of the other three criteria. If any of the three are high, then board disagreements do not have a deleterious effect on acquiescence. They are dangerous only if understanding is missing, if there is conflict, or if participation is low.

Participation

The factor analyses and the multiple regression analysis yielded these ten variables as the most important indicators of participation:

Positive indicators

XV:22	Ratio of district per family income to state per family income, 1960
XI:2	Salary increases emphasized in campaign -- S
XIII:14	Ratio of schools to parent groups
XI:12	Use of letters and postcards to get out parent vote
XX:9	Opposition to school policy by agricultural groups
XVII:49	Extent of individual criticism -- BP
XIX:3	Large taxpayers represented on board

Negative indicators

X:16 Business procedures: use of cost accounting

VII:10 Ratio of 1950 to 1940 pupil enrollment

XV:114 Ratio of 20-29 age group in 1960 to 10-19 age group in 1950

Size of district is significantly related only to X:16 (Business procedures: use of cost accounting).

Analyzed in the context of acquiescence levels, only one variable--XIII:14 (Ratio of schools to parent groups)--fails to have a relationship with participation apart from the pattern of support based on participation. And only one variable--X:16 (Use of cost accounting)--fails to play a part in the pattern of support.

The number of parent groups relative to the number of schools is quite important for achieving acquiescence through lower participation. This pattern of support needs more parent groups, so that turnout can be selectively controlled.

Eight of the variables (all but XIII:14 and X:16) have relationships with both participation itself and the pattern of support based on low participation. It seems that participation is functionally closer to acquiescence than either understanding or quiescence, given these results.

A pattern of nonsupport

We found that nine of the variables studies have significant correlations with more than two criterion variables. Eight of these imply unfavorable impact on school-community relations. The ninth, 1:22 (Agreement with power structure), was found to have an artifactual relationship with understanding; so, in effect, there are no instances of multiple favorable impact--beyond the patterns of support already cited.

What we have inferred, therefore, is that there is one way to go wrong in school-community relations, and several ways to come out all right.

The nature of the pattern of nonsupport can be seen in the regularity with which these multiple relationships contain the same elements: conflict and lack of acquiescence. And, in all but one, they contain lack of understanding.

Because some of these eight are not antecedent in time to conflict, but rather represent reactions to conflict, the lack of understanding is serious when it indicates an unsuccessful result of these reactions. That a variable like XXII:12 (Average time devoted to board business by board members) has a negative relationship with understanding is especially discouraging.

In addition to XXII:12, these seven variables were found to have multiple criterion relationships with unfavorable import:

XI:6	Disagreement among school representatives in campaign
XI:12	Use of letters and postcards to get out parent vote
XI:24	Extent of emphasis on needs in campaign -- S
XV:10	No. of specific rivalries among neighborhood factions
XVII:41	Organized opposition use of letters to newspapers
XVII:48	Individual criticism of tax level -- O
XVII:49	Extent of individual criticism -- BP

Patterns of support

Five variables are common to all of the patterns of support, two by their presence and three by their absence:

Conditions favorable if present

XV:47	Percent employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, 1960
XV:190	Ratio of 1950 percent employed in construction to 1940 percent

Conditions favorable if absent

XI:12	Use of letters and postcards to get out parent vote
XVII:6	Individual criticism of school administration -- 0
XVII:9	Individual criticism of tax level -- 0

In addition, some variables are uniquely helpful to one or two of the patterns of support.

Acquiescence through understanding is facilitated by the presence of I:22 (Agreement with power structure), I:53 (Superintendent as a school leader -- T), XII:23 (Information procedures for parents), XVII:33 (Conservative elements: religious), and XVIII:6 (Citizen pride in schools). It is also helped by the absence of XV:9 (Extent of neighborhood factions), XVII:49 (Extent of individual criticism -- BP), and the trouble indicated by XXII:16 (Board educational goal: prepare children for citizenship).

Acquiescence through quiescence is helped by the presence of XV:195 (1960 percent of population attending school) in particular, and also by the presence of I:4 (No. of years experience as a superintendent), and XV:269 (1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area). The absence of these conditions is also helpful: XI:2 (Salary increases emphasized in campaign -- S), XI:24 (Extent of emphasis on needs in campaign -- S), XV:22 (Ratio of district per family income to state per family income, 1960), XV:114 (Ratio of 20-29 age group in 1960 to 10-19 age group in 1950), XV:194 (Ratio of percent of population in annexed area to percent population increase, 1950-60), XIX:1 (Informal advice on school policy by business leaders), XX:9 (Opposition to school policy by agricultural groups), and XXIV:24 (Mass media in "watchdog" role). This pattern is also more frequent in smaller districts.

Acquiescence through lower participation is achieved in the presence of I:22 (Agreement with power structure). It is also helped by the absence of XI:2 (Salary increases emphasized in campaign -- S), XIII:14 (Ratio of schools to parent groups), XVII:49 (Extent of individual criticism of schools -- BP), the difficulty that gives rise to XXII:16 (Board educational goal: prepare children for citizenship), XXIII:21 (Covert action by board on major decisions), and XXII:53 (No. of situations where board disagrees).

Deviations from support patterns

We examined two kinds of deviations from the patterns of support: 1. Where acquiescence was high even though understanding was lacking, or conflict was present, or participation was high; and, 2. where acquiescence was low even though understanding was high, quiescence was high, or participation was low.

Only two variables are common to acquiescence outside the support patterns of all three modes:

I:4 No. of years experience as a superintendent. This helps if present and the patterns are not operative.

XXII:16 Board educational goal: prepare children for citizenship.

This helps if absent and the patterns are not operative. That is, it helps if the condition responsible for this goal is absent.

Districts that achieve acquiescence without understanding are characterized by the presence of two aspects of stability: XV:114 (Ratio of 20-29 age group in 1960 to 10-19 age group in 1950) and XV:269 (1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area). They also benefit from the absence of XIX:1 (Informal advice on school policy by business leaders)--or the conditions responsible for such advice--and XXII:53 (No. of situations where board disagrees).

Districts that achieve acquiescence without quiescence are aided by the presence of I:22 (Agreement with power structure), XV:22 (Ratio of district per family income to state per family income, 1960), XV:114 (Ratio of 20-29 age group in 1960 to 10-19 age group in 1950), and XV:194 (Ratio of percent of population in annexed area to percent population increase, 1950-60). The absence of these variables also helps: XVII:9 (Individual criticism of tax level -- 0) and XXII:53 (No. of situations where board disagrees).

Districts that achieve acquiescence with high participation benefit from a higher ratio of schools to parent groups (XIII:14), and from XV:195 (1960 percent of population attending school), XV:269 (1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area), and XVII:33 (Conservative elements: religious). They also benefit from the absence of XI:24 (Extent of emphasis on needs in campaign -- S), XV:9 (Extent of neighborhood factions), XIX:1 (Informal advice on school policy by business leaders), and XXIV:24 (Mass media in "watchdog" role). For several of these, the benefit resides in the conditions being absent which ordinarily evoke these responses.

Districts that achieve understanding but not acquiescence derive their greater understanding from the presence of XII:23 (Information procedures for parents) and XV:194 (Ratio of percent of population in annexed area to percent population increase, 1950-60) and from the absence of II:30 (Student misconduct in the classroom -- P) and XV:9 (Extent of neighborhood factions). That acquiescence does not also occur seems due to the presence of two variables that indicate conflict (XIX:1--Informal advice on school policy by business leaders and XXI:3--No. of school conflicts with civic institutions) and three variables associated with high participation resulting from conflict (XI:2--Salary increases emphasized in campaign, XI:12--Use of letters and postcards to get out parent vote, and XIX:3--Large taxpayers represented on board). The absence of these conditions also works against acquiescence: I:22 (Agreement with power structure), X:16 (Business prcedures: use of cost accounting), XV:47 (Percent employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, 1960), and XV:269 (1960 ratio of resident workers to workers in area).

Districts that have quiescence but not acquiescence obtain the quiescence from the absence of V:21 (negotiation by professional organization: profession, policies, and training), XIX:1 (Informal advice on school policy by business leaders), and XXI:3 (No. of school conflicts with civic institutions). It also helps if they are smaller districts. Acquiescence seems to be prevented by the presence of XV:36 (Ratio of district heterogeneity of income to state heterogeneity of income, 1960) and the resulting criticisms of school administration and of the tax level (XVII:6 and XVII:9). The absence of I:22 (Agreement with power structure), I:4 (No. of years experience as a superintendent), X:16 (Business procedures: use of cost accounting), and XV:190 (Ratio of 1950 percent employed in construction to 1940 percent) also militate against acquiescence even though there is no conflict.

Districts that have low participation but not high acquiescence derive the lower participation from the presence of VII:10 (Ratio of 1950 to 1940 pupil enrollment) and from the absence of XIX:3 (Large taxpayers represented on board) and XX:9 (Opposition to school policy by agricultural groups). The lack of acquiescence seems to result from the presence of XV:9 (Extent of neighborhood factions), XV:42 (Ratio of 1960 ratio of district to state imbalance toward high income to 1950 ratio), XVII:6 (Individual criticism of school administration -- 0), and XVII:9 (Individual criticism of tax level -- 0), and from the absence of XV:190 (Ratio of 1950 percent employed in construction to 1940 percent), XVII:33 (Conservative elements: religious), XV:47 (Percent employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, 1960), and XV:194 (Ratio of percent of population in annexed area to percent population increase, 1950-60).

Informed observer judgments

As part of our research, we questioned ten persons in each district about the effect of 169 conditions on local school-community relations. Thus, we had these subjective estimates to compare with the objective estimates of our other data.

We sorted the 256 variables with significant correlations to one or more criteria into the 169 areas, then analyzed the differences between the subjective and objective estimates.

The most common difference was that observers felt some conditions had a favorable impact on school-community relations when, in fact, we found that the only significant relationship was a negative correlation with quiescence. What seemed to be happening was that the observers hoped these conditions would help in troubled situations. But, as we have seen, most responses to conflict have little success in achieving acquiescence--directly, or through a pattern of support.

A second difference of some importance was that observers often downgraded the effects of district characteristics (of the sort available in census data), perhaps because they are not the most obvious kinds of factors in school-community relations. But many of the most helpful conditions for successful support are such district characteristics.

Dividing the 169 areas into 13 segments, and counting the ratios of favorable to unfavorable impact within each segment, we found a rank correlation of .46 between the subjective and objective orderings. This figure gives the observers more than their due, however. Because it was based on the ratios of favorable to unfavorable impact, it overlooks three important kinds of observer error:

1. There is no reduction in the correlation coefficient when the observers imputed effect to a condition but none was found. Of the 169 conditions, 155 were judged to have a positive impact by the observers. This is far beyond the situation as our data picture it.

2. The correlation coefficient does not reflect the numerous situations where observers erroneously impute effect to a condition when only a part of this condition is operative.

3. It does not give enough weight to the very important

situations in which some negative effect does occur even though the ratio is favorable. Dangerous boomerangs are possible if the behavior of the schools is blindly predicated on the general observations rather than the specific findings.

Conclusions

In our earlier study, we found two very general characteristics of school-community relations in the data supplied by informed observers:*

1. Each factor in the process seemed to invariably work either for or against successful support of the schools.

2. The nature of the process seemed to consist of attempts by school leaders to maintain control by not upsetting a favorable balance of factors and, when the balance was threatened, to reestablish control by reacting to the specific source of the difficulty with some manipulative tactic.

The first of these has been clearly destroyed by our recent data. Whether a factor has a favorable or unfavorable impact is contingent upon other conditions. For example, XXII:53 (No. of situations where board disagrees) has an unfavorable impact only in the absence of understanding, quiescence, or participation.

The second of these needs considerable modification. We might still be justified in using it as a characterizatinn of the process as seen by school leaders. The numerous reactions to difficulty suggest as much.

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*In that study we had no objective assessments, only the data supplied by informed observers. See: Communities and Their Schools, op. cit.

However, the failure of most of these reactions suggests that this picture of school-community relations is inaccurate--and inadequate. Given a knowledge of the process, we would not expect such dismal failures as the indiscriminate use of citizens' committees and the unproductive efforts of school boards.

We found one way that generally characterized how districts ran into trouble: the conditions associated with a configuration of conflict, less understanding, and lack of acquiescence. It is this aspect of the process to which school leadership is attuned.

Their successful reactions to this aspect of the process depend on their--or someone else's--ability to somehow thwart this kind of situation. The most obvious is obtaining the help of the local power structure.

But there is more to the process than this. There are a number of conditions related to other ways of achieving support. Some are relatively stable district characteristics that enhance attempts to obtain support through understanding, through quiescence, and through lower participation. Some are conditons which the school leaders themselves have the power to alter--for example, information procedures for parents and having teachers participate in election campaigns only as discussion participants.

Achieving support through quiescence is largely fortuitous--at least it is for now. There is no control on the emergence of conflict, only attempted control of it when it becomes threatening. District characteristics, not school leaders, determine the presence of quiescence.

To some extent, the school leadership--in response to difficulty or in anticipation of it--has been successful in achieving support through understanding. This kind of control, through effective communication techniques, has been more closely tied to lower participatinn than to lack of conflict, however. There are no variables significantly related to both understanding and quiescence, but XII:22 (Information procedures for teachers) and XII:23 (Information procedures for parents) are both related to understanding and to lower participation. Similarly, more parent groups in the district helps achieve support through less, not more, participation.

The conditions, manipulable or not, available to attain better understanding should also be available to avert conflict, so that it need not be combatted. The superficial process of difficulty and response to difficulty can be replaced by intervention into the other aspects of process. Better understanding may not always lead to acquiescence, but it should invariably lead to a lack of conflict.

For this to occur, more effort has to be put into the support pattern based on understanding. Particularly, efforts must be directed along the lines suggested in the two previous studies of this project.[*]

If there is to be support for what is needed in public education, and not for just what is wanted by voters whose special interests can be manipulated, then something more than political sophistication has to become evident in school-community relations.

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[*] *Informal Communication about Schools*, *op. cit.*, and *Between Citizens and Schools*, *op. cit.*

Appendix A

Publications of Project: CAST

and Related Reports

(as of June 30, 1966)

Publications of Project: CAST

Callahan, Robert L. *Teachers' Attitudes and Their Relationship to Administrative Aspirations*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, 1962.

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